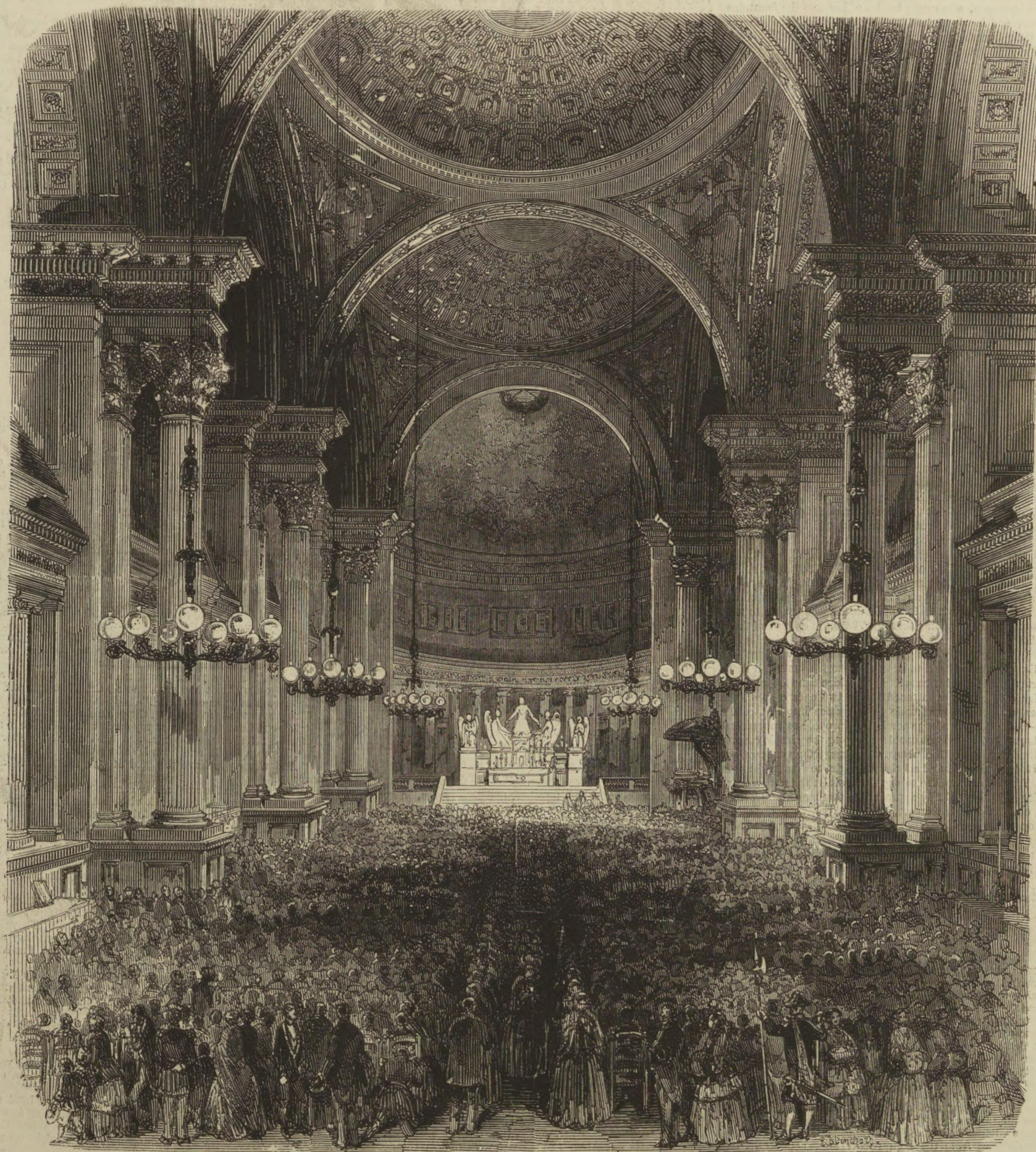


VOL. XXIII.]

LONDON, DECEMBER 24, 1855.

[GRATIS.]



MIDNIGHT MASS AT THE MADELEINE. PARIS — DRAWN BY PH. BLANCHARD.

CHRISTMAS IN PARIS.

By M. CHARTON.

Noël! Noël! disons trois fois Noël!
Chantons de cœur Noël pour complaire à Noël!

Midnight strikes! All the clocks of Paris ring, chime, buzz: all the cradles (of the infant Jesus) are decked with leaves and illuminated. But the small churches—sombre, poor, and naked—open their doors in vain: people pass by without stopping before their dark and deserted portals, or their windows which the feeble light within scarcely serves to illuminate. The multitude are hastening towards Notre-Dame, the Madeleine, Notre-Dame de Lorette, Saint-Vincent de Paul, Saint-Roch, Saint-Sulpice, or Sainte-Geneviève; and soon the waves of that living sea pour into those vast sanctuaries, all glittering with pictures, sculpture, gold, and lights, resonant with the chaunt of priests, the murmur of prayers, and the noise of footsteps. It is a brilliant and admirable spectacle for the eyes; but is it equally so for the mind? Is it, in truth, a real piety which calls together, at this hour of the night, beneath the sacred vaults these crowds of men and women, of old and young, of rich and poor? Alas! if suddenly a voice should sound from on high, uttering in a tone like thunder: "All ye that in this house of God, think not of God, depart! Ye that pray not, depart! Ye that came here solely out of worldly curiosity, depart! Ye that nourish in your hearts frivolous or guilty passions, depart! Depart, indifferent and forgetful souls! Souls without faith, depart!" Oh! what a sudden terror would blench all these faces! With what haste these pretended Christians would rush dismayed towards the doors! How easy it would be to count, in a few seconds, the rare and truly faithful bending to the earth, and fervently imploring the divine mercy in the midst of the silence and the solitude!

It is sad to think that the Midnight Mass should be one of the ceremonies which give the most trouble to the Parisian police. Whilst the Swiss (beadles) with their silver mounted canes and their innocent iron halberds, give chase to dogs and to school-boys of small invention, who empty bottles of ink into the fountains of holy water, and laugh at the black spots which pious women make upon their foreheads, the police agents glide into the crowd, observe and spy, and surprise more than one hand insinuating itself into the pockets of the lookers-on. But to be impartial, we must acknowledge that these scandals are not peculiar to our century. They have existed almost in every age, and more than once the ceremony of the Midnight Mass has been altogether proscribed. Mercier, the author of the *Tableau de Paris*, relates that in his time armed soldiers had to be stationed at intervals of twenty paces in the church of Saint-Sulpice, in order to check the impudence and audacity of the youth of both sexes assembled there.

If Christmas-night is the only one in the year on which churches are frequented, it is also the only one on which the custom of taking supper is generally preserved. Where is the humble home in which, midnight passed, the *réveillon* is not heard? On the first floors the tables are covered with wax-lights, flowers, oysters, turbot, *pâtés de foie gras*, *galantines*, *truffes*, fruits and champagne. At the *réveillon* of the garret and the porter's lodge, there is nothing more than a piece of that meat, which is the abhorrence of the Jews, smoking upon the gridiron, with, perhaps, some fritters, roasted chesnuts, and a pitcher of cider. Add to these a few old songs and the entertainment is complete. This last dish, not the least enjoyed, no longer enlivens the suppers of the rich; their ears have become too delicate for the choruses of their fathers. People still find pleasure, however, in some saloons in hearing couplets in which the wit excels the music, and sallies, decently joyous, provoke the smile. Such couplets are usually sung by artists; but artists like Nodaud, the poet-musician, and the comic Levassor, are not to be found every day. After the repast and the songs, the juveniles dance the *cotillon*: the elder people, and those who call themselves reasonable, sit round the card-tables, scowl and dispute at whist with a sour politeness; and cast, from time to time, a look of envy towards the rows of fecs or the punch which groups of idlers lay violent hands upon in the passage.

At length the dawn is about to appear, the lamps grow pale, the weary faces grow white, the *cotillons* and the whist are over, the visitors retire to their own abodes; but there is a noise of gliding footsteps in the rooms of the little children. Behold! what a strange circumstance! Before all the mantel-pieces of Paris are ranged, with a wonderful symmetry, charming little shoes, pretty little *bottines*, miniature slippers, and, at the extremities of the *faubourgs*, poor little sabots! It will be asked, what all those tiny little boots and shoes are doing there? There are enough of them to cover the feet of all the inhabitants of the vast kingdom of Lilliput. What are they doing there? They are waiting for a beautiful little luminous hand to descend from heaven to fill them with preserved fruits and bonbons! In the olden time the presents intended for children were fastened to the two ends of the Yule Log. Later an attempt was made to introduce into France the Christmas-tree, which, in a large portion of Europe, has superseded the Yule Log. But it is most usual to keep to the simple custom of filling the little shoes with bonbons, which more than one mother, *ouvière et bourgeoise*, has had the foresight to reserve for that purpose. We will not venture to say that, whilst the good mother or the elder sister is stealthily approaching the hearth and stooping down, one of the little sleepers, kept awake with expectation, does not open his eyelids slyly, and say to himself: "Ah! I was sure it was not the little Jesus!" But the prudent child will take care not to confess that he has discovered the mystery: he has too much interest in being cheated next Christmas-day; and in a few hours the room will ring with his cries of false surprise but real gratification.

CHRISTMAS IN THE PROVINCES.

By M. CHARTON.

The provincial towns, seeing that the old customs are abandoned by the Parisians, have no great desire to preserve them any longer. That which ceases to amuse Paris, is not worthy to amuse the *provinces* and the *sous-provinces*. Better a thousand times *ennui* than a diversion which is no longer the fashion in the capital. The programme is therefore simple: after the mass will come the *réveillon*; there will be no singing, but there will be dancing if Messrs., the lawyers' clerks, do not consider this diversion beneath their dignity, or do not prefer risking their month's salary at whist. Happy are the children of the provinces that Paris has not yet abolished the *bonbons* in the little shoes!

In order to find traces of the old customs of Christmas, we must leave the large cities, the small towns, the great boroughs, and the large villages behind us, and wander away into the fields, at a wide distance from the high roads; and, above all, from the lines of railway. But go as far as we may, we shall nowhere find that the fête of Christmas-day is celebrated with all its ancient traditions. The ceremonies used to commence long before the solemn day arrived. Rustic musicians, called "*Hautbois de l'Avent*,"

blew their instruments from house to house, beginning at nine o'clock in the evening and ending at midnight, during the four Sundays preceding Christmas-day, which were called, with their weeks, the *Temps de l'Avent*. On the morning of the eventful day they accompanied the seigneur, the provost, and the senechal to the *parc des coupes forestières*; an enclosure, adjoining the chateau, in which the cattle of the poor peasants were shut up for having had the audacity to browse a little grass or a few sprouts in the seigneur's domaine. The provost and the senechal after having made the sign of the cross, and repeated aloud three times: "*Pax sit inter vos!*" opened the barrier of the park and restored to their owners the guilty oxen and asses, if it should so happen that there were any. At night-fall the fires of all the houses were extinguished. Brands were then lighted at the lamp of the Virgin in the church and blessed by the *cure*; the people then traversed the whole country round about, bearing in their hands these flaming branches, which, on their return home, served as a means of re-kindling the fires; foremost among which was the famous Log known by the name of the Yule Log or the *coque de Noël*. It very rarely happened that the enormous Log was entirely consumed; and its remnants were carefully preserved until the following Christmas. While the Log was burning the children retired into a corner of the room and repeated prayers: the elder portion of the party took advantage of the interval to attach to the ends, the spiced sweetmeats and packets intended for the young folks. At the same moment a branch of ivy was suspended from the chimney piece. At this signal, received with joyous shouts, the boys embraced the little girls, tearing away, for every kiss, a leaf of the ivy-bough until it was left entirely bare. Out of doors, in the field or the court-yard of the chateau, the people amused themselves in a thousand different ways; some mounted upon the carts by the side of the musicians; some went about in disguise as at the carnival; some carried banners with tongues represented upon them, crying: "False tongues, we will skin them all, since they are good for nothing!" Others again made grimaces as if they wished to bite the moon, to break a needle with their knees, or to stop the four winds with their hands. At midnight all the games ceased; the bells rang slowly; on all sides the merry-makers flocked towards the churches, with pitch torches or tarred brands. After the mass the congregation chanted the Christmas Carols or *Noëls*, as they are called, and returned home again, singing all the way, to sup before their burning Yule Log, unless the liberality of the seigneur should have provided them with a grand *réveillon* in the vast hall of the chateau.

There are no such fêtes now-a-day in France: but the Noël is still celebrated with a portion of the ancient piety and solemnity in some of the provinces.

In Brittany, in the district of Treguier, for example, troops of boys and girls disperse themselves on all sides, when the night sets in, and sing *Noëls* at the corner of the *carrefour*.

In Burgundy, nothing of the olden time has been preserved except good humour and glad songs; and more guests may be seen at the *réveillons* than Christians at the mass. The old men still repeat by rote several of the celebrated ancient *Noëls bourguignons*, in which the native Burgundian wit is more abundant than the piety.

In Normandy, the custom of beginning the year on Christmas-day was preserved for many centuries. The midnight fête was then a more solemn one than it is at present, and its symbolical meaning more easily understood by simple minds. Christmas-day was a more manifest signal for universal renovation. Religion, nature, customs, business, the affections, all seemed to re-unite on that anniversary of regeneration, to start afresh with renewed activity in all the various directions of human life. There was a singular emblem of this idea in the monasteries of the olden time: on Christmas-eve the monks were authorized to take a bath and change their garments, as they had great need, poor fellows! but it was at the same time a symbolical way of saying to all Christians: "Purify your consciences, renovate your hearts!" The symbol is forgotten—the lessons remain. After every year of fatigues and trials, have we not all great need to cast aside our old garments and to bathe our hearts at a new fountain of resolution and hope?

THE STONES OF PLOUHINEC.

A CHRISTMAS LEGEND.

By ÉMILE SOUVESTRE.

Plouhinec is a poor town beyond Hennebont, in the vicinity of the sea. There is nothing to be seen around it but heaths and small pine woods; and the parish has never possessed enough grass to feed an ox for the slaughter-house, nor enough bran to fatten a descendant of the Rohans (1).

But if the inhabitants are destitute of corn and cattle, they have more flints than would serve to build Lorient. And beyond the town is a large heath in which the Korigans have erected two rows of long stones, that might be mistaken for an avenue if they led any where.

Near these stones, towards the banks of the river Intel, there once lived a man called Marzinne: he was rich, for the district;—that is to say, he could salt a little pig every year, eat black bread à discrétion, and purchase a pair of *sabots* on the *dimanche du Laurier* (Easter-Sunday).

Marzinne was considered a proud man in the country, and had refused his sister Rozenne to several young men who "earned their bread by the sweat of their brows."

Among these was a youth called Bernez, a hard-worker and a worthy Christian, but who had brought nothing legitimate into the world with him, except a willing heart. Bernez had known Rozenne when she was a little child; he had then just arrived from Ponscarff-Bride, to work in the parish, and she had often followed him singing the song that the children repeat to all who come from his country:

Ponscarff-Bride,
Chair de chèvre, bée! (Ba-a-ah!)

This first brought them together, and by degrees, in proportion as Rozenne grew up, the attachment of Bernez increased;—until one day he found himself in love, *comme les Anglais sont damnés*, that is to say, without reprieve.

It is easy to understand that the refusal of Marzinne was to him a heart-breaking circumstance; nevertheless he did not lose courage, for Rozenne continued to receive him well and to sing to him with smiles the old chorus composed for those that come from Ponscarff.

It was on the night of Christmas-day, and as the stormy weather had put a stop to all out-of-door labour, the farmers assembled together, and with them several young men of the neighbourhood, among whom was Bernez. The master of the house who wished to show how large a heart he had, had caused a supper of puddings and *bouillie de froment au miel* (porridge and honey) to be prepared. All eyes were turned towards the fire, except those of Bernez, who looked upon his dear *Rozennik*.

But lo! Just as the seats had been drawn up to the tables and the wooden spoons planted *en rond* in the basin, an old man threw open the door hastily and wished every body a good appetite.

It was a beggar of Pluvigner who never went to church, and of whom honest folks were afraid. People accused him of casting charms upon the cattle, of blackening the corn, and of selling magic herbs to the wrestlers. Some even suspected him of being able to turn himself into a hobgoblin.

Nevertheless, as he wore the clothes of a poor man, the farmer allowed him to approach the fire; he even let him have a three-legged stool to sit upon, and treated him like a guest.

When the sorcerer had finished eating, he asked if he might have a night's lodging, and Bernez went to open the door of the stable for him, where there were only an old donkey and a thin ox. So the beggar lay down between them to warm himself, and

(1) A sobriquet given to pigs in Normandy.

rested his head upon a sack of heath. But just as he was about to fall asleep, midnight struck. The old ass shook its long ears and turned towards the meagre ox.

"Well, cousin, how have you been since last Christmas, when I spoke to you?" asked the ass, in a friendly tone.

Instead of replying the other animal glanced towards the beggar.

"It is a great pity that the Trinity has accorded us the gift of speech on Christmas-night," said he, in a sulky tone; "and thus recompensed us for the assistance our ancestors rendered to the birth of Jesus, if we are to have for an auditor such a good-for-nothing as this beggar."

"You are a very proud animal, M. de Ker-Meuglant," resumed the ass gayly: "I have more right to complain;—I, the chief of whose family formerly carried the Christ to Jerusalem, as is proved by the cross which has since been marked between our shoulders; but I know how to be contented with the blessings which the Trinity accords to me. Do you not see, besides, that the sorcerer is asleep?"

"All his sorceries have not sufficed to enrich him," replied the ox; "and he damns himself for very little. The devil has not even given him notice of the fine chance he will have, in a few days—and close by this place, too."

"What fine chance?" asked the ass.

"What!" replied the ox; "do you not know then that, every hundred years, the stones on the heath of Plouhinec drink in the river Intel, and that during this time the treasures hidden under them are brought to light?"

"Ah! I recollect now," interrupted the ass; "but the stones return so quickly to their places, that it is impossible to avoid being crushed by them, unless you take with you, to preserve yourself against the danger, a branch of the Herb of the Cross, surrounded by sprigs of clover with five leaves."

"And moreover," added the ox, "the treasures that you have taken away will crumble into dust unless you give in return a baptised soul; for nothing less than the death of a Christian will bribe the demon to allow you to enjoy in peace the riches of Plouhinec."

The beggar who had listened to all this conversation scarcely dared to breathe.

"Ah! dear animals! my little hearts!" thought the beggar to himself; "you have just made me richer than all the *bourgeois* of Vannes and Lorient; be assured, the sorcerer of Pluvigner will not damn himself for nothing any more."

He then fell asleep, and in the morrow at day-break, he was in the fields seeking the "Herb of the Cross," and the clover with five leaves. He was obliged to search for a long time and to plunge deep into the country, where the air is warmer and the plants are always green. At length, on New-Year's-eve, he reappeared at Plouhinec, looking like a weasel that has found its way to a dove-cot.

As he was crossing over the heath, he perceived Bernez occupied in striking a pointed hammer against one of the highest stones.

"God help me!" cried the sorcerer, laughing; "are you going to carve a house out of this column?"

"No," replied Bernez, quietly; "but since I am out of work for the moment, I thought that if I were to trace a Cross upon one of these accursed stones, I would do a work agreeable to God, who would recompense me sooner or later."

"You have then something to ask of him?" observed the old man. "All Christians have to ask of him the safety of their souls," replied the young man.

"And have you not also something to ask him about Rozenne?" added the beggar, in a lower tone.

Bernez looked at him.

"Ah! you know, then?" he resumed; "but after all, there is no shame or sin in it; for if I do seek the young girl, it will be to lead her before the *cure*. Unhappily, however, Marzinne wants a brother-in-law who can count more *réales* than I have hairs on my head."

"And if I put you in the way of obtaining more *louis d'or* than Marzinne has of *réales*?" said the sorcerer, in a whisper.

"You!" exclaimed Bernez.

"Me."

"What would you ask then in return?"

"No more than a remembrance in your prayers."

"There would then be no need of my compromising the safety of my soul?"

"It would only require courage."

"Then tell me what I am to do!" exclaimed Bernez, dropping his hammer on the ground. "I am ready to expose myself to thirty deaths, for I would rather marry and die, than live without marrying."

When the beggar perceived that the young man was so well disposed, he related to him how on the coming night the treasures would all be displayed, but did not inform him of the means of avoiding the stones on their return. The young man, thinking it only required courage and promptitude, resumed:

"As sure as there are three persons in one God, I will profit by the occasion, old man, and my life will be at your service for the hint you have given me. Let me only finish the cross which I have commenced to carve upon this stone, and when the time arrives I will rejoin you near the little pine-wood."

Bernez kept his word, and arrived at the appointed place an hour before midnight. He found the beggar waiting for him, with a wallet in each hand and one round his neck.

"Come," said he to the young man, "sit down there and think of what you will be when you have all the silver and gold and precious stones at your command."

The young man sat down on the ground and replied:

"When I have the silver at my command I will give to my sweet *Rozennik* all that she desires, and all that she has ever desired, from linen up to silk and from bread up to oranges."

"And when you have the gold at your command?" added the sorcerer.

"When I have the gold at my command," said the boy, "I will make the parents of *Rozennik* rich; and all the friends of her parents to the furthest limits of the parish."

"And when you have the jewels and precious stones?" said the old man.

"Then," cried Bernez, "I will make all men happy upon the earth, and say that it was *Rozennik* who wished me to do so."

While they were talking in this manner the hour passed and midnight struck.

At that very instant they heard a great noise upon the heath, and they saw, by the light of the stars, all the large stones leaving their places and rushing towards the river Intel. They descended the length of the hill-side, bruising the earth as they went, and tumbling against each other like drunken giants. Passing beside the two men they disappeared in the darkness.

Then the beggar ran towards the heath followed by Bernez, and in those places where a short time since the great stones had stood, they saw wells full to overflowing with gold and silver and precious stones.

Bernez uttered a cry of admiration and made the sign of the cross; but the sorcerer set to work, filling his wallets, at the same time listening attentively in the direction of the river.

He had just finished loading his third wallet, and the young man his waistcoat pockets, when a dull murmur like that of an approaching storm, sounded in the distance.

The stones had finished drinking the water of the Intel, and were returning to their places. They rushed on, bending forwards like racers, and broke every thing they came near. When the young man perceived them approaching he stood straight up and cried aloud:

"Oh! Virgin Mary, we are lost!"

"Not I," said the sorcerer, who had seized in his hand the Herb of the Cross and the clover with the five leaves; "for I have here

my safeguard. But it was necessary that a Christian should lose his life to assure me of these riches; therefore renounce Rozenne and prepare for death!"

When he had uttered these words, the army of stones arrived; but he presented his magic bouquet and it turned away to the right and to the left to precipitate itself upon Bernéz. He, perceiving that all was over with him, fell down upon his knees and was going to close his eyes, when the great stone which headed the rest stopped all of a sudden and closing up the passage, placed itself against him, to protect him, like a barrier.

Bernéz, astonished, raised his head and recognised the stone upon which he had engraved the cross! It was now a baptised stone and could do no injury to a Christian.

It stood still before the young man, until all its companions had taken their places; and then darted forward as swiftly as a sea-bird to its own place, meeting on its way the beggar who had been retarded by the weight of his three wallets.

On seeing it approach, the sorcerer stretched out his magic plants; but the stone, now become Christian, no longer submitted to the enchantments of the demon, and passed hastily on, smashing the sorcerer as if he had been an insect.

Bernéz thus possessed, besides what he had himself collected, the three wallets filled by the beggar, and became rich enough to marry Rozenne, and to rear as many children as the *laouinnak* has young ones in its nest.

CHRISTMAS AND THE CARNIVAL.

By M. H. MARIE MARTIN.

La vieille église, toute vibrante et toute sonore, était dans une perpétuelle joie de cloches.
V. Hugo, Notre-Dame de Paris.

When on the Christmas of the pious year 1482 the brisk bells of Notre-Dame filled the night with merry chimes, and the old towers shook with the resounding echoes, those mighty voices were understood by the faithful multitude; and Quasimodo himself—the deaf, the humpbacked Quasimodo—understood and loved them! And along the crooked, ugly streets of the old Gallic city, the obedient Christians came in crowds at that revered signal to attend the solemn mass of midnight.

But at the present day, how things have changed!

Modern Paris with its new streets, tastefully laid out, and its clean spacious, comfortable houses—like so many palaces!—Paris, with its gaieties and its pleasures, its sciences and its luxuries,—when the great bell of Notre-Dame sounds at midnight in commemoration of the mystery of the divine birth—Paris is as deaf as Quasimodo.

Ah! it is because France has no longer any Christmas! No Sacred Christmas-day, festival so beloved by our pious ancestors; no Merry Christmas-day,—no dear old family tradition,—no joyful fête of the domestic hearth.

Christmas was a creed; Christmas was a custom.

But the modern French are a nation of sceptics; they have no creed!

The France of our time is a revolutionary country; she has broken the links that joined her with the past; she has no traditions—no customs. More than sixty years ago she scattered to the four winds of heaven—never to call them back—her old usages, her joyous Gallic songs, her renown for amiability of manners, and her chivalry!

Happy the old nations who have a Christmas-day! Such nations are still young. Christmas, called by our fathers the *Cri de Joie*, is the fête par excellence of juvenile gaiety—the festival of children. It is the first, the youngest day in the Christian period; therefore the nations that have remained faithful to it, and celebrate it joyfully, prove alike their faith and their youth.

We, by antithesis, who call ourselves *young France*, we, who have lost our native faith and gaiety, we,—a people without a Christmas,—what fête have we chosen? What is the day of our sceptical joys,—what is the moment of our pagan laughter? It is the end of that period of which Christmas is the commencement;—it is the *mardi gras*;—it is the carnival!

We speak of "the diversions of carnival" as the English speak of "Merry Christmas." By these different names given to the same period of pleasure, the moral age of the two nations may be estimated.

Thus the customs of Christmas-night pass away and are lost. There are traces of them however still in existence, but we must not seek them in Paris; but far away from that revolutionary centre, in some province that is behind the time, some humble corner of France, such as Brittany, where the peasants still go out to the midnight mass, singing "Noëls" in the midst of their barren heaths; and where the children still walk in ranks to the doors of the farms and the *chateaux* on New-Year's-eve, singing the ancient chorus of the Druids: *Au Gui! au Gui! l'An neuf!*

The Yule-Log too is forgotten among us! And there is perhaps not one Frenchman of the nineteenth century who has ever reflected on the simple origin of this *bûche*, so necessary to the peasants during the cold Christmas-nights, when they sat up waiting for the bells to call them to mass. "In every family," says one of our old chroniclers, "they blessed the Yule-Log, anointing it with wine and repeating over it the words: 'In the name of the Father!'"

Now-a-days we are too wise, too proud, too philosophical to sing Christmas Carols and to bless Yule-Logs! That was all very well at the time of Quasimodo. The bells of Notre-Dame chime in vain—such music is not for our refined ears. For us, let it be said once more, for us there is no Christmas; but, there is a carnival!

Very well! let us speak about the carnival!

The carnival lasts from New-Year's-day to *mardi gras*. That is the true Parisian season.

New-Year's-day is a day of surprises. It is not for us to talk about the boxes of bouillons that the good old January slips under little children's pillows during the night.—Grand surprise!

Nor is it our place to speak of the visits of those poor disdained second cousins, who go on that day only to visit the great lady, their relative.—The unexpected apparition!

But what impatience, what desires, what diplomacy are identified with *étrennes*, or New-Year's-gifts! and often, how many deceptions!

But here, at least, we find traces of one of our oldest traditions. For it is direct from the ancient Romans that the custom has come down to us of giving compliments and *étrennes* (strenæ) in the kalends of January.

At cur leta tuis tuis dicuntur verba calendis
Et damus alternas accipimusque preces?

asks Ovid in his *Fasti*.

But let us see how far we are faithful observers of this tradition of good wishes and presents on New-Year's-day.

First of all we acknowledge willingly that compliments are as numerous now as ever they were;—they cost nothing.

As for *étrennes*, the following is an authentic anecdote about them, which would be disavowed even by Pierre Durand, the witty chronicler of our *salons*, and which is one illustration, among a thousand others, of the morality of New-Year's-gifts.

On the 28th December of last year, at a soirée which took place in one of the finest hotels of the *Chaussée-d'Antin*, M. Charles C..., an *agent de change*, was dancing with the wife of a rich banker, when in the *caserne* of the *contredanse*, they happened to speak about *étrennes*, and M^{me} X..., the banker's wife, complained of her husband's parsimony.

"I expect," said she, "some niggardly present; but I am resigned."

"Who knows?" observed M. Charles, with an expressive smile.

"What do you mean?"

"And you, Madame, what would you say, if your husband gave you a bracelet worth three hundred *louis d'or*?"

"Oh! it is impossible," replied the lady.

"It would astonish you still more, perhaps, if I were to tell you that it depends entirely upon me."

"My husband's giving me a rich present depends upon you?"

"Yes, Madame."

"And how came you ascertain the exact amount of his outlay?"

"The outlay is already made, but the question is whether the gift will be for you."

"I understand you," said M^{me} X... frowning, as Juno must have frowned on hearing of Jupiter's intrigue with Danaë.

"The affair is a delicate one," continued M. Charles; "but that is my concern."

"What have you to do with it?"

"That is my secret; but what matter, so that I succeed?"

"Oh! if you succeed!"

And, interrupting herself, M^{me} X... smiled upon him in her turn with singular expression.

On New-Year's-eve the banker knocked at the door of an elegant apartment in the *quartier Bréda*.

M. Charles was lounging in an immense arm-chair, with his feet upon the fender. He rose on hearing the knock.

"It is he!" said a little silvery voice. "Run, Charles, run down by the secret staircase."

But instead of doing as he was desired, M. Charles went himself and opened the door.

It was a *coup de théâtre*. The fair owner of the soft voice uttered a piercing cry and fell down fainting upon the carpet. The banker, dumb with astonishment, manifested his indignation in a tragic pantomime. M. Charles alone stood calm and smiling.

Some minutes afterwards, the banker regaining the use of his tongue, exclaimed: "I suspected it! but I was far from being sure—on this day, too, above all others, when I had brought her *étrennes*—superb *étrennes*! a present worthy of a prince!"

And he drew out of his pocket a jewel-box containing a bracelet worth three hundred *louis*.—"What folly!"

He resumed: "but what am I to do with the bracelet?"

To return it to the jeweller would be to sustain a loss of ten or twelve per cent, which financiers do not like to lose;—they would much rather give than lose.

The banker returned home with the jewel-box in his hand.

"*Parbleu!* said he to himself; 'I will give it to my wife!'"

M^{me} X... received the bracelet.

And the gallant husband, who thought he had done wonders, made sure that his wife would be grateful.

We must confess that we have nothing to be proud of in this tradition *des étrennes*. The shameful marriages for money which we see around us—and it may be said that a marriage for love is a rare exception in France—are carrying us on fatally towards the dissolution of the social ties. To the rich Frenchman, a legitimate wife is nothing but a name!

And what could I show English readers in our French society, even if I were to call up before your eyes a panorama of the Parisian carnival with its concerts and its balls of all kinds: balls of the Tuileries, balls of the hôtel de ville, subscription-balls of the mayoralty, balls of charity, balls of duchesses, balls of vanity, burlesque balls, balls *célibataires*, and balls of ladies under twenty-five years of age, and most *recherchés* of all—children's balls and *bals masqués* of the Opera?

What is there to show you in this glittering review of the high society of Paris?—A brilliant display of dresses embroidered with gold and silk, jewellery and lace, furs and diamonds!—Wives estranged from their husbands; husbands gambling at cards or at the Bourse; serious young men already at twenty years of age disgusted with dancing, and hunting for a dowry; and young girls ambitious of obtaining a husband, not for the sake of the holy joys of mutual affection, but in order to be free from restraints and to have the right of wearing diamonds!

And if you seek the true French gentleman, with that noble bearing, that distinguished and perfect elegance, of which the emigration at the end of the last century sent so many models to foreign countries—seek him not in the modern carnival of Paris. Rather go back to the time of Quasimodo.

Salons where the French wit still sparkles, relieved by all the delicacy of the purest gallantry, salons not yet rendered vacant by death,—that politics have not troubled or dismembered; shall we find any left! Shall we cite those of M^{me} de Staël?—of M^{me} de Camille, — of the Princess de Belgiojoso, — of M^{me} Lamartine, — of M^{me} Victor Hugo, — of M^{me} de Montcalm, — of M^{me} la duchesse de Duras, — of M^{me} la vicomtesse de Noailles, — of M^{me} d'Aguesseau, of M^{me} de Virville, — of M^{me} la comtesse Merlin, — of M^{me} de Benusat, — of M^{me} Philippe Séguir, — of M^{me} de Castellane, etc.?

We will not say that these salons are defunct, on the contrary, there still remain charming ones! But count them!

No doubt you will think us severe critics of French society; but why ask us for a Christmas, when we have only a carnival to show you?

It is true some people see magnificent hopes appearing on our horizon; they see that with the modern development of civilization a New Faith will rise up which will be the safe guard of the French people. We accept, with thankful hearts, these blessed auguries, and when another Quasimodo shall toll the bells of Notre-Dame for all, we will be the first to raise the joy-shout of our fathers: "*Noël! Noël!*"

PARIS ON NEW YEAR'S MORNING.

Paris is asleep from one end of the city to the other. But long before day-break the drums cause the silent streets to resound with a deafening noise: it is the morning homage of the National Guard to the superior officers of that force. This signal warns the citizens of the liberality they will have to display; for under colour of respect and deference the music of the drums is but a demand for a gratuity. A serenade or aubade, we scarcely know which to call it, is also given on a grand scale, under the windows of the Tuileries—to salute the Empress or the Emperor—and was in like manner given with similar formality to the king or queen, when there was either king or queen in France. But this, though an imposing spectacle (see *Illustration*) is one that is not familiar to the mass of the people of Paris. Every body is too busy on New-Year's-morning, to have time for looking at shows however splendid—or listening to music however admirably performed. Each family has its own business to attend to. The little children awaken in expectation of the dawn; they anticipate in thought the enjoyments and surprises of the day. The head of the family soon receives the compliments and the promises of the various members of his household. There is not a tradesman in his employment, there is not an individual who has rendered him any service direct or indirect in the course of the year, who, on the First of January, does not comport himself towards him with the same ceremony as if he filled the highest position in rank and power. Irrespective of his duties as head of a family and subordinate of some other person, the citizen has to fulfil various obligations as a member of society. He has connections in the world, friends or acquaintances as it may be, whom he has to visit. The exigencies of civility are less with regard to these last-mentioned. In a country where the social relations extend with marvellous facility, a man would be infallibly bored to death if he were obliged to pay these visits in person. The sending or leaving of cards shortens this long and wearisome formality. Our era has even gone beyond the *sans façon* of the last century. Formerly these cards were taken by servants; in this proceeding there was a remnant of respect. But now-a-days it is to the post-office, or to the agents of an administration specially charged with this service, that is delegated the duty of distributing *cartes de visite*. In the provincial towns where the relations of life are more immediate, it

is customary to place a dish at the door, in which every visitor drops his card. The custom of inscribing the name in a book at the door, is reserved for high and royal personages.

NEW YEAR'S GIFTS IN A WORKING MAN'S FAMILY,

[WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY GAVARNI.]

By ÉMILE SOUVESTRE.

Among those large and but little frequented streets, which occupy the high ground on the left bank of the Seine, there is one of which the aspect is particularly quiet, and so to speak, provincial; it is the *rue du Montparnasse*. In that street several houses of the better class of citizens, surrounded by planted courts or gardens, are mingled among carpenters' workshops, timber-yards, and the humbler abodes of mechanics and artisans. The comfortable hotel overlooks the shed; the superfine coat rubs against the blouse. And this contiguity produces neither arrogant disdain on the one side nor envious hostility on the other; each lives in his own sphere without comparing himself with his neighbour.

It was chiefly on account of the quietude of the place that M. Lefèvre, an *ex-conseiller d'Etat*, had decided upon fixing his abode in it. M. Lefèvre was an old bachelor, rich and well-informed, who, after having lived for himself when he might have been useful to his fellows, found fault with others for doing as he had done, now that he began to have need of their sympathy and assistance. His egotism, having grown old, had, as usually happens, transformed itself into misanthropy. Too enlightened not to recognize his mistake, and too self-indulgent to reproach himself with it, he made a compromise between his judgment and his *amour-propre* by deferring the self-condemnation which he knew that he deserved.

He employed all his ingenuity in proving the vices of his fellow creatures. Drawing consolation from every fresh instance of perfidiness, hypocrisy or servility, he exclaimed, with a kind of melancholy satisfaction: "I said it was so!" The world for him was nothing better than a vast hospital of diseased people who gave him the opportunity of proving his skill as a physician by pronouncing them incurable.

There were certain circumstances and certain periods of the year which, to him, were particularly favourable for such reflexions. M. Lefèvre took a supercilious delight in assuring himself of the greedy baseness of all who came to him in the hope of profit; he moved with a pitiless hand the springs of such human *marionnettes*, and when he had forced them into a betrayal of their own baseness, he cast them a piece of gold into the gutter.

This wicked diversion which was, at bottom, only a round-about way of seeking his own self-justification, had brought its punishment along with it. Far from finding in it any real satisfaction, the old *conseiller d'Etat* grew daily more morose. It was all very well to degrade mankind in order to exalt himself, but a sentiment of brotherhood made him participate in the degradation. In vain he sought to fortify himself by hatred and disdain; he was like the reed spoken of by the Evangelist which breaks at the first step, and pierces the hand which it ought to support.

He had had a new proof of this on the occasion of New-Year's-day. Seated before the fire in a luxurious and costly arm-chair, which he never by any chance offered to a visitor, he had successively received all those pretended friends who hasten to offer their vulgar good-wishes on New-Year's-day. First came the servants for the customary *étrennes*, repeating the vernal compliments which they had learned by rote; then the god-daughters and clients in straightened circumstances who, in expressing their good-wishes, always found the means of referring to their wants; next came the relations, near or remote, bringing useless presents—usurious loans which he had been obliged to pay back a hundred fold. To these succeeded acquaintances repeating the ordinary good-wishes for his health and happiness with the same indifferent interest which they would have displayed in deploring his ruin; and, lastly, came the outer circle of acquaintances less intimate, who leave their *cartes de visite* at your door, to testify that your name is still inscribed in their visiting-books among those of the people to whom they owe a call.

The old magistrate who had found no satisfaction in his morning's work, except in the irony with which he had presented each comer with his gift, and who had exhausted both his patience and his wit, breathed a sigh of satisfaction when he saw that the drawer in which he had deposited his *étrennes* was at last quite empty. He cast his eyes upon a little memorandum he had made of the persons among whom he had just distributed his gifts, and rapidly calculated what they had cost him.

"Twelve hundred francs!" he muttered, shrugging his shoulders; "twelve hundred francs paid for falsehoods, which have not had wit enough among them to be different in their forms! Twelve hundred francs to make twenty discontented, and thirty ungrateful persons! For of all those who have just left me, carrying away my gold or my crown pieces, is there a single one who supposes my liberality to have been voluntary? Who is there among them that would not prefer my death to my life, if it would bring him a *sou* more? New-Year's-gifts! ridiculous cheats kept up by custom, in spite of common-sense—pitiful comedy which really deceives no one, and in which one person gives without pleasure what the other receives without gratitude. What is it but a remnant of the old Roman relations between client and patron—an unnecessary custom which cupidity favours, and vanity dares not abolish?"

At these words he closed the drawer and rose with a bitter heart; beneath his apparent disdain for humanity, a sadness and discouragement lay concealed which he in vain strove to disguise from himself. These men, despicable as he deemed them, were after all, his fellow-travellers in the journey of life—the only beings with whom he could exchange ideas, anxieties or hopes. The more he found them unworthy, the more he deprived himself of sympathy and of resources. Every vice was a security lost; for in every man whom he successively discovered to be despicable he lost a companion or a friend!

Saddened by these reflections he drew near to the window, leaning his feverish brow against the pane of glass, freshened by the cold air without. He remained for some time motionless in the same place, his eyes wandering along the street and among the gardens and the workshops.

His looks were at last fixed on the *atelier* of an old turner, named Humbert, who had only been established in the street for a few months. Although age had bowed his shoulders and silvered his beard; and although he was compelled to have recourse to spectacles to help his weak sight, he went to his work as soon as the day dawned, and at night-fall he still toiled by the light of his lamp. Whilst the only assistant he employed, rested from time to time, took his meals at ease, and slowly obeyed the bell that called him to his task, old Humbert was always at his post, break fasted without leaving his bench, and had for a time-piece nothing but his zeal. Indulgent to every one, he was exacting only to himself.

He had thus managed to bring up and educate a son, now one of the first mechanics in Paris, and who was at once his father's pride and happiness. An only daughter still remained at home; and it was for her sake that the old man worked so hard. Already betrothed to a cousin, she waited till the savings of the young man might enable them to keep house: and the old father laboured in silence, to hasten the coming of the day which would leave him alone in the world;—but which would, at the same time, secure the happiness of his daughter.

At the moment when the eyes of M. Lefèvre fell upon this modest *atelier*, the old turner was at work with his assistant, and the rolling of the two wheels, then in movement, might be heard across the street.

Suddenly M. Lefèvre saw the door open, and the old man's daughter entered the *atelier*.



SERENADE AT THE TUILERIES ON NEW YEAR'S EVE. — DRAWN BY EUGÈNE LAMY.



NEW YEAR'S GIFTS IN A WORKING MAN'S FAMILY. — DRAWN BY GAVARNI.

She no doubt announced the arrival of an expected visitor, for her father showed signs of joy, and opening a cupboard, took out a *bilboquet* (cup-and-ball) and a child's toy representing a windmill.

Almost at the same instant the son appeared at the door, and threw himself into his father's arms. There was in the warm embrace of the young workman, in his agitated voice, and in his gestures, from which a bystander might almost have guessed the words that were unspoken, so tender an expression that the old *conseiller d'Etat* was interested in spite of himself. He rubbed his hand over the window-pane, dimmed by his breath, and gazed more attentively.

New actors shortly made their appearance on the scene to complete this family picture; they were the two grand-children of the old turner, introduced by their mother.

The old man hastened to hide the play-things behind his back, whilst the son, with his arm affectionately placed upon his father's shoulder, encouraged the children to approach. The youngest held in its hand a snuff-box of *cuir bouilli*, resembling ebony in colour and polish; the other a porcelain cup, with a saucer, on which the initials of the grand-father were traced in golden letters. Both advanced half shy, half smiling, and the youngest lisped a good-wish for the New Year, whilst the mother, at every hesitation, whispered in its ear the forgotten word or syllable.

The old man much affected, pressed both the children to his heart. He asked them little questions, listened to their replies, his hand all the while playing among their curls;—kissed each of their foreheads; and then, in his turn, distributed the *étrennes* which he had purchased for them.

On seeing the little wind-mill and the cup-and-ball, the children uttered shouts of joy. The gifts were evidently unexpected. After throwing their arms around their grand-father's neck, they forced every one present to admire their riches. They went from their father to their aunt, from their mother to the workman, showing the wonderful playthings with triumphant exclamations, and then returned to the old man to thank him again. New embraces were interchanged among the members of the family, and all left the *atelier* together: the children going before accompanied by the young girl, and followed by the aged mechanic, arm in arm with his son and his son's wife.

After their disappearance M. Lefèvre remained for a long time in the same place. What he had just seen appeared like a reply to the accusations which a short time before had risen from his chagrined heart; and a doubt came over his conscience whether his philosophy were quite sound. He thought that if the rich presents which had fallen from his hands, had not awakened a gratitude similar to that with which the humble gifts of the old turner had been received, it was not the fault of humanity, but of himself; that after all love was only the result of love, and that the value of New-Year's-gifts, like that of every thing else, could only be estimated by the heart.

ENVOI A GAVARNI,

Sur son tableau : "Le Jour de l'An de l'ouvrier."

Sous des ais de charpente, en des murs bien bâtis,
Je vois un atelier et de simples outils :
L'engrenage, le tour, l'étau, le T, l'équerre,
Ce qui mesure, broie, assouplit la matière.
Devant son établi, debout, un grand vieillard
Qui porte sur son front les soucis de son art,
Dont au premier aspect la physionomie
Tempère la finesse avec la bonhomie,
Supporte doucement sur son dos mi-voulté
Son fils, homme de fer, doux et plein de fierté.
Une enfant déjà grande et sa mère, deux anges,
Dissemblables beautés et vertus sans mélanges,
Présentent par la main et sur le premier plan
Deux beaux petits garçons. Le premier jour de l'an
Se devine aux jouets qu'ils montrent au grand-père.
Le vieillard, affectant une mine sévère,
Cache derrière soi pour les montrer après
Avec plus de plaisir, des joujoux qu'il tient prêts :
C'est un moulin à vent aux deux ailes croisées
Avec un bilboquet. Oh! les douces visées
Qui naissent dans l'esprit de ces naïfs parents!
Les moins enfants, je crois, ne sont pas les plus grands.
Un artiste railleur dont le crayon s'aiguise
Sur le déshabillé de mainte Cydalise,
Par un contraste heureux qui retrempe son cœur
Et donne à son talent une jeune vigueur.
A bûné ces traits où vit tant d'espérance,
Où d'une belle eau bleue on voit la transparence.
Que d'avenir sommeille en ce tableau pieux!
Il met du baume à l'âme et repose les yeux.
Les enfants élevés dans cette humble atmosphère,
Gavarni! seront grands sans sortir de leur sphère.
Celle fête naïve et ce recueillement
Font aimer le travail. Ce bel enseignement
A décollé sans art de ton heureux génie
Qui laisse reposer un instant l'ironie.
C'est le cœur tout empreint de ta douce leçon,
Que je t'ai dédié cette frêle chanson.

LA CHANSON DU JOUR DE L'AN.

Refrain.

Petits enfants, je sais lire
Dans ce rire,
Ce rire si rose et si blanc;
C'est aujourd'hui le jour de l'an.
Le beau jour de l'an, pour l'enfance,
Est toujours un événement;
De brimborions quelle abondance.
En échange d'un compliment!
Pour leurs dents fines, mieux rangées
Que les petites dents des rats,
Que de bonbons et de dragées!
Ils ont des joujoux à pleins bras!
L'arbre de Noël, cette année,
Avait déjà porté son fruit;
Jésus, sous votre cheminée,
Avait mis son présent, la nuit;
Huit jours sont un siècle, peut-être.
Pour vos petits gosiers d'oiseaux;
Le jour de l'an, par la fenêtre,
Éclaire des présents nouveaux.
Chacun d'entre eux se précipite
Sur ses bonbons, sur ses joujoux;
Vingt fois les prend, vingt fois les quitte.
Glisse dessus, roule dessous....
A chaque fois qu'on vous embrasse
C'est un déluge de cadeaux;
Du pantin la tige se casse,
Et Polichinelle a bon dos.
Un tambour derrière l'épaule,
Trompette en bouche ou fifre aux dents,
C'est un petit-fils de la Gaule,
Sabre au poing, et les yeux ardents.
Prends plutôt ce petit navire,
Ou cette bêche, ou ce compas!
Dans ton alphabet sais-tu lire,
Toi qui marches si bien au pas?
Dans le jour pâle des mansardes,
Je vois des enfants demi-nus

Jouer avec de vieilles hardes,
De petits martyrs inconnus.
Enfants riches! de leurs guenilles
N'ayez jamais peur en chemin;
Donnez-leur un peu de vos billes,
Et tendez-leur de votre pain.

PIERRE DUPONT.

Le 30 novembre 1853.

THE SONNEURS OR WAITS OF BRITTANY.

[WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY PENGUILLY.]

By ÉMILE SOUVESTRE.

"Souffle, souffle, hardi sonneur! En t'écoulant, les jeunes filles
"révent la danse sur le sable uni des grèves, et les jeunes gars pré-
"parent l'anneau d'argent pour leurs plus aimées; hardi sonneur,
"souffle toujours."

I repeated in a low voice this couplet from a song of the district of Cornouaille, recalled to my memory by the wild melodies of the hautbois and the *binious* which resounded from all parts: it was the *sonneurs* (or waits) of the country who were making their rounds in celebration of the New Year, playing *aubades* at the doors of all the village authorities. I had already met several of their bands and exchanged the ordinary salutations.

"Joy be with you from the white to the black month, my dear, gentleman!" (1)

"The same to you, my friend."

"May the Trinity receive you in its paradise after the last anguish!"

"May it give you a crown of stars!"

"God be with you!"

"The virgin protect you!"

And I pursued my journey, still hearing as I went the echoes of these rustic melodies, which seemed to throw after me from afar many happy good wishes for the approaching New Year.

I had long known this race of wandering musicians who traverse the parishes of old Brittany, gaining their subsistence from marriage and other celebrations, and always in search of festivities. Unconth remnants of the once powerful corporation of the *Bards*, or Bards, formerly attached to the Druids, and charged with the care of preserving in their songs the remembrance of the national glory. The *sonneurs* of Brittany have retained some of the customs of the ancient Bards. Like their predecessors, a wandering people, known by everybody and receiving everywhere a ready welcome, they acquire in this exceptional existence a sort of rough gaiety foreign to the other Bretons. The people often cite instances of their audacity in visiting haunted places at midnight, in braving apparitions in the churchyards, or in traversing districts inhabited by those redoubtable dwarfs, called Kourils, who live among the stones of the Druids; others speak of the Arhez mountains, crossed in the middle of the winter, while troops of famished wolves are abroad besieging the doors of the hamlets. The *sonneurs* thus acquire a high prestige and reputation; not that they gain affection or respect, but that a kind of admiration is felt for these rash and merry "Bohemians," who, according to an expression of one of their band, "walk bravely upon the earth without fear of anything either above or below!"

The night was gathering around me on the moor; I saw the circular tops of the hills disappearing in the cold fog of the last day of December; patches of snow covered here and there the uneven portions of the more elevated heaths, and the steeple of the church of the *Château neuf du Faon* rose before me illumined by the last rays of the setting sun.

I soon reached the hospitable dwelling of Captain Le Sur, who was expecting my arrival.

I found the cloth laid in a small apartment, which, with its low ceiling, its painted wainscoting and its narrow windows, had the appearance of the cabin of a ship. The captain, whose life had been spent in ploughing the seas, took a pleasure in these arrangements, so conformable to his old habits and reminiscences.

He received me with the cordiality of a Breton and a sailor, without speeches but with extended hands and smiling lips. An old arm-chair was placed for my disposal beside the hearth on which the stump of a young oak tree was burning cheerfully. At a corner of the table prepared for the evening's repast stood one of those dusty bottles with their *cachets* mildewed by time, which announce choice nectars such as those to which Horace refers, and which have been left "to grow old in Sabine casks during several centuries!"

I had just sat down, with my feet upon the hearth; the heat had already begun to melt the hoar-frost incrusting the rim of my gaiters, and my host, his hand placed kindly upon my knees, had just done inquiring about the friends we mutually esteemed, when we were suddenly interrupted by the explosion of an *aubade* beneath the windows of the house.

At the same instant, old Dinorah, opened the door, crying out:

"Monsieur! It is the two Plodus and Barvanek."

"Ah! ah!" said the captain, rising with an air of satisfaction;

"the old chouans have not forgotten me then."

"Perhaps you have become a public character since my last visit?" I inquired, smiling; "and I am the guest of a new magistrate?"

"Not that I know of," said he.

"What is the reason then of this concert?"

"Oh! that is an old story," replied the sailor; "but let me see to these musicians. Dinorah, follow me with the glasses into the cellar."

He went out with the old servant, and I approached the window to have a look at the *sonneurs* who continued playing their music.

They were three in number; their dress consisted of the breeches usually worn in Cornouaille, a leather belt, a *soutache*, and a little fringed hat adorned with a pea-cock's feather. The plaintive music of the *biniau*, an instrument formed of goat skins, was played by the elder of the three; whilst the younger musician accompanied them on one of those rustic hautbois, whose sharp notes pierce the air like arrows. All three seemed animated by a passionate ardour, as if the rude harmony they produced intoxicated them with delight. There was a sort of violence in the expression of their faces, and in their breathless efforts. With sparkling eyes and tightening hands they prolonged their provoking modulations as if they were hurling a defiance. The notes actually seemed to hiss in the air and clash against each other.

At last they ceased in a long and plaintive cadence; I then heard the door open, and the captain went out followed by Dinorah carrying four glasses on a tin dish.

On perceiving the sailor, the three *sonneurs* saluted him with joyful and friendly deference. He went from one to the other, shook them heartily by the hand, and filled and emptied the glasses with the two Plodus and Bavarnek.

From the window at which I stood, I heard them exchanging the New-Year's-greetings. Each drank another glass of wine and the *sonneurs* prepared to take their leave.

"Joy be with you till the year following the one that is coming," exclaimed the elder of the two Plodus, touching his hat.

"God grant that we may all meet together again as we have done to-night," exclaimed the younger brother.

"Let us drink each other's health in memory of the night on which we first met!" exclaimed Bavarnek.

At this remembrance they touched the four glasses one against the other, and the *sonneurs* departed.

They had long disappeared in the darkness when I heard once

(1) The inhabitants of Brittany call January the white month (*Gwen veur*) on account of the snow; and December the black month (*Kerdes*) on account of the fogs and the rain.

more the sound of the *binious* and the sharp, piercing notes of the hautbois. The echoes grew weaker and weaker till they were lost in the silence of the night.

The captain returned, Dinorah following with the plates for supper; he pointed out my seat at table, and drawing the cork from the mildewed bottle already referred to, made excuses for the *aubade* and the delay it had occasioned.

"Our Breton music," said he, "is not of the choicest to offer to a guest, and has perhaps spoiled your appetite for supper; but I and Bavarnek and the Plodus are old friends, and I could not leave them standing at my door without giving them, as the phrase goes '*le salut des vins*'."

"Indeed it appeared to me," I replied, "that your acquaintance was intimate and of ancient date."

"Twenty years."

"And if I am to believe what the elder of the three said, it is closely allied to an event of which this day in particular recalls the memory."

"True; their *aubade* is the celebration of an anniversary."

"You have already told me," I resumed, looking at him, "that it is an old story."

"And you wish me to relate it," said the captain, smiling. "But a host should refuse nothing to his guests. Besides I remember that at Coppet, when there was not enough for dinner, M^{me} de Staël made up for the deficiency by an anecdote; perhaps my recital will serve to distract your attention from Dinorah's deficiencies. If the palate is not satisfied the ears can take supper."

Thus speaking he filled my plate and my glass, and leaning his elbow on the table, whilst I ate and drank with an appetite which protested against his fears, commenced the following recital:—

"The story I am about to relate," said he, "goes back to the last days of the Empire, when France was vanquished by Europe; when our Breton ports were blocked up by the English fleets and filled with disarmed vessels, amongst which was my brig the '*Alcyon*.' Condemned to an involuntary idleness, I returned to my native town where we soon learnt that certain ancient chiefs of the royalist party, encouraged by the recent disasters of our troops, had again armed the chouans."

All the scouts of the royalists were in movement; some huntsmen who, emboldened by custom, still ventured into the woods of Saint-Goazec, or into the heaths of Montreff, had met women following the most unfrequented paths, beggars turning their backs upon the villages where they expected to receive alms, and priests on horseback enveloped in large cloaks, plunging at a heavy trot into solitary defiles. It was reported that the bands of the north and of Morbihan had thoughts of reuniting their forces in order to undertake an expedition against Carhaix, where they were likely to be welcomed by the sympathy of many of the inhabitants.

The government instantly formed into companies in self-defence. I joined the volunteers of Faon, without seeking any particular rank, and our battalions soon commenced operations in all directions. These expeditions often attended with no positive result or precise information, were not very serious. In spite of all the fears loudly expressed from time to time, it was difficult for us to imagine any real danger. The terrible civil war kindled during the Republic between town and country, was known to us only by the recitals of our fathers. We had not participated in the bloody dramas that the "*blues*" and the chouans had enacted on our moors during a period of six years. It was to us scarcely more than an historical tradition. The reconnoitering parties ordered out by the superior authority, were considered rather as military promenades than important expeditions; their proved inutility had increased our confidence, and we began to laugh at the uneasiness of the prefect. But a letter from him at last arrived, informing us of the increasing activity of the royalist chiefs; how they had been seen traversing isolated farm yards, and how a convention was being held at the *Château de Gouare*; and concluding with a hint as to the necessity of redoubling our vigilance.

Our commander, a determined sportsman, who loved action for its own sake, decided on a grand march in the direction of Gouare. For two days we made our preparations, but not so much for a dangerous enterprise as for a promenade of curiosity. A midnight walk upon the mountains was a novelty for the greater part of the volunteers, to which the idea of peril added a peculiar emotion, that was not without its charm.

We departed at night-fall at a brisk pace, the cold weather being favourable to quick walking. A half transparent fog obscured the glitter of the stars. It was the last day of December; lights shone in all the casements of the little town, and we heard, as we passed by, the songs, the bursts of laughter or the stifled cries of joy which issued from the inside of doors carefully closed and bolted.

"Gage! they are all preparing for the New Year," said lieutenant Duroc, in a jovial tone; "this evening they make horns of sweet-meats for the children and pan-cakes for the parents. But let us quicken our pace a little, comrades, for we must return here to-morrow to claim our portion of the feast."

"Shall we have to keep walking until we meet the chouans?" inquired one of the volunteers.

The whole troop replied by a shout of laughter.

"The *percepteur* forgets that these gentlemen of the night are not visible to the naked eye," resumed M. Duroc; "their existence is an administrative creation which we owe to the bureaux of M. le Préfet. The birth has been inscribed, although the child is not yet born."

"What are we going to do then in the mountain, lieutenant?"

"We are going to take the air, my dear, sir."

"In that case one may smoke a cigar?"

"Aye! and even offer one."

The *percepteur* distributed some among his comrades.

"Never mind," said he, as soon as the cigars were lighted; "I ask myself, what is the good of this 'white night' since there is nothing to do in the mountain?"

"What good!" repeated the lieutenant, with mock gravity; "and the orders of the prefect, sir! Will you not let him have his bulletin from the great army? or save the empire by our interposition? You must know that we are here to gain for him the cross of the legion of honour, or a place in the senate—and let that keep your nose warm. For after all, gentlemen, it is only the nose that suffers from this cold fog. Besides the night is splendid—excellent weather to wait for the wolves to come out of their hiding-places! What a pity that M. le Préfet has not commissioned us to send him some of their furs, instead of the ears of the chouans!"

And thus led on to his favourite topic, lieutenant Duroc related some of his hunting-adventures, interlarding the recital with fictions as well as puns.

Our troop, composed of about twenty volunteers, had by this time insensibly broken its ranks. Some had gathered around their lieutenant, who grew more and more animated, while others had followed in small groups, laughing and singing alternately. One would have taken us, not for a military expedition, but for a company of jolly comrades returning with their muskets on their shoulders from some *rendez-vous* of pleasure.

We continued in this manner as far as the banks of the river of "Terror" (1), which we crossed between Saint-Goazec and Spezet.

Arrived in this place opinions differed as to the road we ought to take; there was not one among us all who knew anything about the footpaths which traversed the *lande*; and the increasing darkness rendered it still more difficult for us to discover our whereabouts.

After a long and confused debate, we at length decided upon taking a guide.

The sergeant, together with some volunteers, was accordingly sent for the purpose of seeking one at an isolated house lying a little towards the right. But before they had reached it, they returned

(1) The river Laon, erroneously called Laune by geographers.

leading with them a young peasant whom they had found hiding behind a bush.

He at first appeared somewhat frightened, but the lieutenant succeeded in reassuring him; and he confessed that on hearing our approach, he began to be afraid, not knowing whether we were armed "in the name of God or in that of the Devil."

"And whom do you consider as the soldiers of the Devil?" inquired the lieutenant. "Faith! it may be said of the town-folks," replied the lad, naively; "for they recruit for the bishop of Vannes, and once forced our fathers to take arms with them, under the penalty of finding all their cattle slaughtered, and their poor huts reduced to ashes."

"Have they begun to reappear in the country?"

"Not to my knowledge; but there is a report from the village that they are forming themselves into bands."

"And so you took us for one of these bands?"

"Monsieur, will excuse me, but that is the truth."

"And you concealed yourself?"

"From fear of being forcibly compelled to make one of you."

"So you are not for the king?"

"No, sir."

"Then you are for the emperor?"

"Neither for the one nor the other."

"For whom, then?"

"For nobody, sir, seeing that if I be for some one I must fight for him; and besides I wish to be for myself, and for nobody else!"

The avowal was so frank, and the tone in which it was said, so natural that we could not repress our laughter.

"Pardieu! gentlemen," cried the lieutenant, "here is one at least who cannot be accused of fanaticism."

"Where were you going when you heard us?"

"To Saint-Goazec, sir!"

"You know the route which leads to Gouare by the Landes?"

"Eh! Sainte-Anne! I walk it every week."

"Then you shall conduct us thither."

The young peasant appeared disconcerted.

"Me conduct you!" he repeated; "why, to do that we shall have to turn back."

"Then turn back!" said Duroc, spinning him round upon his heels and pointing out the way.

"Seigneur! and those who are waiting for me down yonder?"

"They will have to wait," replied the lieutenant; and as he saw the peasant was preparing new objections: "That's enough!" he added, bluntly: "the fog is too cold for us to stay babbling in the moonlight—and see that one of you keep an eye upon him."

The boy perceiving that resistance was useless, resigned himself but with a bad grace, and as if yielding to compulsion. It was in vain that I attempted to justify the violence that was done him, by explanations;—he shook his head without a word and walked on before at a pace with which we had great difficulty in keeping up.

He lost no time in quitting the path we had followed, and led us along the side of the heath in the direction of a gloomy pass between the two hills.

The lieutenant who had once hunted in the *parages*, looked about him without being able to recognize a single feature of the landscape, and was about to express his doubts as to the route followed by our guide; when the latter forestalled him, and replied, in a peevish tone: "That if they knew the way themselves, his assistance was useless, and his further services might be dispensed with." He even made a movement as if he would return towards Goazec, and it required not only the persuasion, but the threats of the lieutenant to force him to continue the journey.

But the gaiety which had enlivened our departure, seemed to vanish in proportion as we advanced into this unknown region. It was piercing cold, the roads were bad, and our party had fallen into an almost universal silence. Instead of *lazzis* and bursts of laughter, there was nothing to be heard but complaints or curses.

But by a singular contrast, our guide seemed under a precisely contrary influence. In proportion as the temper of the others became gloomy, his cleared up. He seemed to be in his element at last, and grew quite talkative. After having told me the names of the woods that rose before us in the distance like spots blacker than the night, and pointed out several ruined farm-houses and manors, whose tottering walls traced their dark outlines upon the sky, he even condescended to accept some tobacco which I offered him.

He had just filled his earthen pipe, when a church bell sounded afar off. He counted the hours one after the other, and turning towards me when the last vibration had died away: "It is midnight," said he smiling; "the New Year has begun and you have unconsciously given me my first *étrenne*."

"God grant it may bring happiness!" I replied.

He looked fixedly at me for a moment, but said nothing, and put the pipe in his mouth without lighting it.

We had entered into the dark ravine which separates the two hills, and we beheld their naked summits on both sides of us, half visible in the star-light. I asked the young peasant where we were.

"In the land of the *sonneur* of midnight!" he replied.

"God help us then!" said the lieutenant, who had approached.

"Gentlemen! be on your guard, you are entering the region of sprites and phantoms; we are in the immediate neighbourhood of a haunted spot! Do you not remember the terrible Ballad of Lao?"

"And if you have forgotten it I warrant your guide will be able to repeat it for you," added the sergeant.

"Aye! aye! let him sing it," echoed several voices.

"You hear!" said Duroc, turning to the peasant; "they call for the 'Guerz of the Sonneur of Midnight!'"

"This is no place to sing it in," observed the guide, whose eyes seemed to pierce uneasily through the darkness.

"Upon my soul he is afraid of awakening the Kourils," cried one of the band, laughing.

"Let him be reassured then; does he not see that we are armed?"

"And authorised by *M. le Préfet*!"

"Come, lieutenant, order him to sing it."

"For the good of the public!"

"If he refuses we will him declare him an enemy of the government."

These threats, uttered in a laughing tone could not have frightened our guide; but at any rate he appeared resolved upon obeying, and after a short prelude he sang the following Ballad in that high prolonged tone which gives to the Breton music a character so doleful, that the lightest heart grows sad to hear it.

The Ballad of the Sonneur of Midnight.

I. The brave *Sonneur* of Cornouaille traverses the moor which leads to the house of the Kourils; in vain the women have told him that he must not tempt God; that there are things in the world which he ought not to know, and others which he ought to fear.

II. Lao replied that, since the little black men had only the wind of the moors and the songs of the night-birds for sonnours, he would approach them fearlessly and make them dance in the moonlight to the beautiful roundels of Cornouaille.

III. Thus speaking he takes his *binou* and goes on his way. In proportion as he advances his heart becomes bolder and the sound of the *binou* stronger and louder. He has already proceeded over half of the *lande* and beholds before him the great stones among which the Kourils live.

IV. He fancies he hears a murmur growing louder and louder every instant. At first, like the warbling of a brook, then like the rush of a river and at last like the roaring of a sea!

V.

Lao begins to blow more feebly and his eyes roll with terror.

VI. All at once the moon rises and he utters a cry! On the right hand, on the left, behind, before—everywhere as far as his eye can see the heath is covered with Kourils running about and repeating in a loud voice: Play, brave *Sonneur*, and lead the dance of the Kourils!

VII. In vain he resists; the *binou* approaches his lips in spite of himself; he plays and he dances involuntarily, until the stars grow pale. The sounds become weaker and weaker and his feet move about less freely.

VIII. At last the cock crows. The *binou* falls from the lips of the *Sonneur*, his arms drop down on his knees, his head hangs upon his breast, and voices in the air repeat the chorus: Sleep, sleep, brave *Sonneur*! sleep till to-morrow night!

IX. And on the following night and every night till the day of judgment, Lao will waken to lead the dance of the Kourils, amidst the agonies of hell; and the sound of his *binou* send forth its warning from afar: *Imprudence is the Sister of Death!*

I fancied there was an accent of dark and menacing irony in the voice of our guide when he pronounced these last words. I do not know whether my companions perceived this, but a long silence followed. Nothing was to be heard for several instants but the clash of our arms and the sound of our footsteps.

At last the lieutenant appeared as if he would shake off this moody impression by a derisive shout of laughter.

"*Mardiels!*" he exclaimed; "in spite of the warning given by the *binou* of Lao, I should not be sorry to learn how much breath there can be in a dead body!"

He had scarcely uttered these words when, as if in compliance with his desire, a *binou* resounded upon the moor from the right hand.

The whole company stopped with one accord. The sounds were loud but hurried, as if the *sonneur* were carried away in some rapid movement; they came nearer and nearer, till at last they suddenly ceased in one of the sharpest notes, as if the instrument had fallen from the mouth of the *sonneur*.

This unexpected silence made the boldest of us start; the lieutenant hastily drew his sword.

"Upon my soul! I will know who this fellow is that is playing the part of Lao!" cried he; "to the right, gentlemen, to the right, by the little foot-path!"

With these words he rushed towards the place whence the sound of the *binou* had proceeded, and we were hastening to follow him when the sounds arose again, but from the opposite hill with the same violence and the same *éclat*.

"Hark! now it is on the left," exclaimed the sergeant, in an altered voice.

"Are you quite sure of it?" asked Duroc, striving to struggle against his own convictions.

Before any one could reply, the *binou* burst forth anew, but this time on the right hand, as if it wished to leave no doubt on our minds.

We all stopped in alarm; some attempting vainly to conceal their fear, by multiplying explanations, each of which was refuted by the invisible and double *sonneur*, who continued playing alternately upon the two hills. The lieutenant, who had been awhile rendered dumb by surprise, turned round to inquire of the guide; but in the midst of the general panic, he had disappeared!

In vain each looked to his neighbour for an explanation;—no one could tell at what moment he had escaped. And in vain we ran from side to side, "searching the night with our eyes;"—the ravine was empty.

Nevertheless the mysterious *sonneur* continued to sound his *binou* sometimes to the right, a little behind us, sometimes to the left; a little before. The sounds became more and more distinct, and the pauses less prolonged, when at last they exploded above our heads, from both sides at once!

Twenty cries burst from our ranks at that instant, and every hand pointed to the two hills. A *sonneur* had just appeared on each height, dancing and walking along the edge; and behind each gathered a crowd of shadows at first indistinguishable in the fog, but when they had attained a portion of the elevation more illuminated than the rest we caught sight of glittering arms. A confused rumour of voices struck upon our ears, and the cry: "The chouans! it is the chouans!" went through our ranks.

It was in truth the chouans. In vain we sought to distinguish the end of those black lines winding down the sides of the hills; no sooner had the foremost reached the ravine than others poured on from behind; they descended the two hills like a double torrent.

The two bands had evidently perceived us, for they did not advance as if to unite, but as if maneuvering to surround us. We should thus have been cut off from all chance of safety. Our only resource was to regain the entrance of the ravine and to force a passage across the foreguard of the chouans, who were just reaching it. Duroc understood this, and having rapidly explained to us what we had to do, rushed forwards at our head with a resolution that was contagious.

At the moment when we emerged from the obscurity that had hitherto concealed us, the chouans uttered a loud cry, and the sound of fire-arms began to echo on the hill.

The lieutenant ordered us to divide, so that the balls of the enemy might take less effect, and the precaution was far from being needless. But as we arrived in face of those who defended the pass, each, by an instinctive impulse, kept close to his neighbour. This movement was fatal to us. A volley of balls reached our serried ranks, and we were soon surrounded with wounded and killed. In attempting to succour them the volunteers, who had at first escaped, were struck in their turn. Our troop which only returned the fire of the enemy by a few isolated shots, began to fall back and seemed to melt under the fire of the chouans. And, at last, when all hope was lost the instinct of self-preservation caused the survivors to throw down their arms and take flight in different directions. Some fell into the hands of the chouans and were massacred; others succeeded in concealing themselves among the bushes until morning, and went home to the Faon to tell the news of our disaster.

As for myself, favoured by chance during the whole combat, I had continued to fire upon the enemy without receiving a single wound; I even succeeded in forcing my way through the line stationed at the entrance of the ravine. There remained but a few steps and the road was free! I had charged my musket for the last time, and was attempting to pierce the darkness that shrouded the path I had to follow, when all at once a spark flashed from a bush at my right hand. I did not even hear the explosion. Struck on the side by a musket shot, I sank down on the ground and lost all consciousness.

I cannot say how long the swoon lasted; but I was awakened from it by cries and the glare of torches. It was the chouans visiting the field of battle to despoil the dead and to kill the wounded. I heard supplications interrupted by a shot, then silence, and then the noise of the victors plundering the bodies.

One of the bands now advanced towards the spot where I lay. I strove to rise, but in vain. My limbs seemed to have lost all relation with my will. The chouans continued to approach, rummaging the bushes on their way, until they were so near that the light of their torches forced me to close my eyes. At the same instant several cries burst forth—they had perceived, and were running towards me.

I lay motionless, my eyelids half-closed, but seeing all that passed around me.

A sinister-looking chouan bending over me, exclaimed,

"Another gentleman of the town to despatch!"

And he had raised his blood-stained hunting-knife, when suddenly an arm arrested its descent; and I heard a voice crying:—

"This prize is mine—leave him to me!"

"Why so?" asked the man with the knife.

"Why!" repeated the voice, "because the 'Blues' once killed seven Christians in my family, and I want to avenge them."

The chouan seemed to understand this explanation, for he went

away grumbling and made room for the other, in whom I had already recognized our guide—the young peasant.

He leaned over me as if to assure himself that I still lived, and whispered in my ear:—"Fear not; but remain motionless!" and rising to load the English carbine which he wore *en bandouillère*, he placed the end of it upon my breast. The beating of my heart ceased for an instant and I held my breath. He made the sign of the cross.

"May God have mercy upon me!" he said, gravely. "This is in memory of my dead."

And the shot exploded. But the barrel of the gun had slid along my hunting vest, and the ball went labouring in the ground at my side. The explosion however stunned me, and I fell off into another half-swoon.

It was this that saved me. The chouans who approached holding torches to my face, believed me dead and left me.

I heard their cries, though vaguely, for some time after their departure; I saw their torches as they passed by: then all was dark and silent.

I but slowly regained consciousness. I had been benumbed and felt no pain. Languor had taken the place of resignation. There was apparently no chance of assistance for many hours, and I felt certain I could not survive so long. I therefore considered my fate as decided and submitted to it. My only regret was that I had not been able to express my last wishes on certain worldly affairs, which occupied my mind at this moment more than life itself.

Suddenly I heard a noise of footsteps along the pathway, as of people advancing with precaution, and on the search for something. I at last distinguished a voice, which said: "It is there!" Three shadows then approached me, and I recognised our guide followed by the two *sonneurs*.

I had raised myself upon my elbow, and the young peasant on perceiving me in this posture, uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Holy Virgin! he moves!" he cried: "Quick! quick! and help me."

"What are you going to do?" asked I, in a half smothered voice.

"What we ought," he replied, rapidly. "Come here, you others, and bear him away gently."

The two *sonneurs* lifted me from the ground and followed the young man as far as the entrance of the ravine, where we found a horse. After having mounted it himself, he raised me on to the saddle and made me sit before him, supporting me at the same time with his arm. We then commenced our journey.

All this took place without my being able to renew my questions. I was so feeble that to speak was too great an effort for me. And thus was I carried away without knowing what he intended to do with me, until we arrived at a village, which I afterwards knew to be Saint-Goazec. Our horse stopped before a door, at which one of the *sonneurs* knocked several times. A voice from the interior replied that the door would be opened immediately. At this announcement I was lifted down and carried to the stone seat that stood near the threshold. The young guide approached me and taking my hand in his, said:

"You are now at the doctor's house;—may Heaven save you! You gave me my first *étrenne*; I give it back to you."

On hearing the key turn in the lock, he threw himself upon the horse, and rejoined the *sonneurs* who had already departed.

It was several months before I completely recovered. During that time events had rapidly succeeded each other. The empire had crumbled to the dust—crushed under its barren glory;—and the exile of Ghent had reascended the throne of his ancestors. The chouans had no longer any motive for concealing themselves. He to whom I owed my life, came to see me with his uncle and his brother, in whom I recognized the two *sonneurs* of the last night of December.

Since then our intimacy has continued. I never fail to see them on this anniversary, and we drink together in memory of the *étrennes* of 1814.

The captain's story, often interrupted, had prolonged itself beyond the supper, to the hour when he was accustomed to retire. Unchangeable in her habits, Dinorah brought two wax-candles. It was now time for us to separate. After thanking the Captain for his recital, and shaking him heartily by the hand, I withdrew to the little chamber that had been set apart for me. As I entered it struck eleven by the neighbouring clock. I approached the window; the stars were unusually brilliant, and threw a soft light on the hill tops, and I heard afar off the sound of the *binious* melting away into the valleys. But their language had changed for me, and instead of awakening the memory of a love-song, it seemed to recall the terrible ballad of Lao; to repeat the warning words: *Imprudence is the Sister of 'Death!'*

THE BONBON TRADE IN PARIS ON NEW-YEAR'S-EVE.

New-Year's-day is for the confectioners a golden mine whose rich vein it takes several days to exhaust. The elegant young ladies who serve in brilliant shops, sparkling with a thousand lights reflected by mirrors and crystal pendants without number, though so obliging and so active are scarcely equal to the task of pouring out for the impatient crowd the floods of sweet-meats for which they thirst: floods more abundant than those which issued, at the touch of the fairy's wand, from the diamond rocks of the *Fortunatelle*! Statistical science, who is not a fairy, assures us that no more than three or four millions of francs worth of bonbons and confectionary are sold at Paris on New-Year's-day. But the fact is, that bonbons multiply in the hands of the Parisians to so wonderful an extent, that if the value of all the sweet-meats that people give each other could be calculated in money, it would certainly amount to at least twenty millions of francs. The meaning of this mystery is exceedingly simple. You give M^{me} X... a bag of *marrons glacés* (preserved chestnuts) tied with a pretty little red ribbon. M^{me} X... thanks you with a smile, opens the bag, graciously offers you one of your own chestnuts and eats one herself. She finds it exquisite; but as soon as you have taken your departure, she carefully ties up the bag and sends it to the children of M^{me} B..., her particular friend. M^{me} B... in great alarm least the bonbons, pastilles, *pralines* and preserved fruits, which fall like manna among the children, should make them sick, does not fail to offer the bag to pretty M^{lle} Sophie, daughter of her old friend colonel C..., M^{lle} Sophie is god-mother to the little daughter of an old sergeant, now a dealer in guns and fishing tackle, in the *rue Saint-Denis*. What a capital thing! exclaims this last, who hastens to do homage to his neighbour, the haberdasher, an amiable widow of forty and upwards. The widow who has her share of self-respect thinks she ought not to owe her neighbours anything, so she sets to work making with her own hands another bag, as white as snow, puts the same *marrons glacés* inside it, substitutes a blue ribbon for the red one, and sends it back to M^{lle} Sophie, who, it is to be hoped, will this time keep them for herself, unless indeed she be compelled to arrange them in a pyramid upon a dessert-plate for the good of the family. Even in this case I should not like to take my oath that the family will eat them! There are in Paris bags of bonbons, that it would be as fatiguing to follow during the first week of the New Year, as to trace the foot-steps of the Wandering Jew! All the necessary calculations being made, the bag of bonbons, whose cost-price was six francs, and whose history we have just related, has served the place of six bags; total thirty six francs.

It often happens that bonbons are worth less than the cover which contains them. It is almost impossible to imagine how much invention, art and labour, are expended on all sorts of boxes for bonbons, great and small. Those intended for rich *étrennes* are covered with delicate paintings, like the most beautiful fans, or they are carved, damasked inlaid, imperaled, and gilt. Others again, more modest than these, imitate every natural form that the mind can imagine. The show-rooms and the factories of the confectioners, may thus be said to exhibit in miniature all the products of human industry.



THE "SONNEURS" (WAITS) IN BRITTANY. — DRAWN BY PENGUILLY.



A BONBON SHOP IN PARIS ON NEW YEAR'S EVE. — DRAWN BY GÉNOLE.

CHRISTMAS SUPPLEMENT
TO THE
ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

No. 660.—VOL. XXIII.]

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1853.

Two NUMBERS, 1s. { WITH SUPPLEMENT
GRATIS.



A CHRISTMAS PICTURE, AFTER RAFFAELLE.—ENGRAVED BY W. J. LINTON.

CHRISTMAS GAMES FOR EVENING PARTIES.

From the time Christmas begins to loom, rubicund and holly-crowned, through the fogs of November, and Baker-street resounds with the heavy top-boots of our modern Colins and Strephons, the rattling wheels of the butchers' tax-carts, and the stifled moanings and apoplectic snortings of their victims, children become, to use a modern political phrase, the masters of the situation, and all our little descendants are forthwith advanced to the dignity of lords of the ascendant. Christmas is the saturnalia of minors; when guardians, natural and appointed, are thrust from their authority, and must see to obey the behests of their young charges. The domestic bark is seized by a crew of mutinous little hands, and navigated gaily through the frozen regions of the winter solstice, with "youth at the prow, and pleasure at the helm." Grave maturity must smooth its frown of state check its croakings, and admonitions; and, dressed in a livery of smiles, kneel a slave to the bright dreams and joyous fancies of childhood. Our drudging wits must be liberated from the treadmill of daily cares, and dispersed abroad marauding for pleasant conceits, toys, and drolleries. We must quit our solemn trifles, and address ourselves earnestly to the office of ministering to the mirth and enjoyment of our little lords and ladies paramount. Mammams must turn their thoughts from the formal prescriptions of domestic cookery to the wild regions of flummery, tartlets, syllabubs and whipt cream; papas must sweep away all pre-occupations of office, desk, and ledger, into the lumber-room of their brains, rub up their reminiscences of school-boy pranks, and rack their fancies for new conundrums; and elder sisters must divide their cares between their own toilets and the becoming adornment of dollies for the younger branches in the female line. All, in fine, must tune themselves—hearts and minds—to the key-note of childish enjoyment, and prepare to enter, with due forgetfulness of all but the present urgency to please and be pleased, into the mirth-echoing realms of the child kingdom.

For the merry games in which, under such agreeable pressure from without, young and old, maid and wife, bachelor and husband, sire and grandchild, are wont at this season to mingle with equal zest, the French have a charming designation, expressive of the guileless simplicity which must animate all who would aspire to join them in their true spirit—*jeux innocens* they call them. Innocence—pure, childish innocence—being, indeed, their essential characteristic; and in that innocence lies all the refreshing enjoyment which they are capable of affording. Unlike the pretended relaxation of the card-table and its kindred, they do not, under the mocking title of play, quintessentialise the world's mammon-worship. In them is no mimic reproduction of the sordid appetites and corroding anxieties that belong to the pursuit of wealth—no watchful eagerness to swell our gains—no sinking of the heart at apprehended loss—no wearing exercise of the faculties under the pressure of these feverish and grovelling impulses in baffling combinatory and shrewdly calculated ventures. They transport, on the contrary, to a utopia of equanimity, an ideal state of joy and innocence, a glimpse of the golden age—that *lucis à non lucendo* of poets (golden, because not curst with gold)—where no musty rules and rigid observances call down frowns on the infractor, but laws are made for the exquisite delight of breaking them. Commend us ever to the frank and genial pleasures of such games (unknown to the subtle Hoyle), where the stakes are a joint-stock of frolic, fun, and gaiety; our gains the gains of all; our loss, haply, a little stiffness and self-conceit—better parted with than kept; and where the keen strife of wit with wit is a generous emulation for uncostly honours, to which defeat brings no pangs of envy, no sour griping of regret—while triumph becomes a general jubilee. Albeit, they remind us not of the base and unromantic phases of this work-a-day world, nor subject us with hypocritical playfulness to its heaviest yoke; yet are they not without some reflex images of the realities of life. The philosopher, while he laughs and romps with the wildest of his little playmates, may yet discover, in the source of their mutual merriment, a type of human folly; and in "Hot Cockles," "Blindman's Buff," and "Hunt the Slipper," may carve out fantastic symbols of the ever-shifting scenes in the comedy of real life. On the first of these he may moralise to the effect that open-handed dealing is not always repaid by a similar return, but when our backs are turned, there are always numbers ready to inflict an injury; while it teaches that the delinquent who strikes the blow unseen by his victim, is not always safe from conviction, and that his "bold Roman hand" may betray itself by unmistakable characteristics. In the second, he may discover an allegorical illustration of the truth, that the infirmities and misfortunes we incur by our own faults, render us in the world objects of derision, rather than pity; or he may see in the blindfold individual a lively image of love, whom all laugh and jeer at until they are caught, and become as helpless and ridiculous as themselves.

As the French have given to these games of happy childhood their happiest designation, so likewise have they proved the most prolific and ingenious inventors of them. Scarcely any indeed with which we are familiar, with the exception of the most traditional and homely, whose antiquity is beyond research, but have been at various times transplanted from the social circles of the French. To them, accordingly, we unhesitatingly recur for a further supply, and have here gleaned together a few of these innocent pastimes which appear to have escaped the extensive gathering already made for the supply, of our active import trade in French notions. It is not promised, however, that all of them are new to England.

THE LOTTERY, OR TOMBOLA.

This is quite a modern introduction, and is generally found productive of much fun. It gives rise to a great deal of excitement, without the disadvantage of rousing the vanity or the covetousness of the players, which are too often the moving springs of our amusements; while it leaves behind solid tokens, and visible remembrances of the past enjoyment; and our joyous laughter is made tributary to the comfort and happiness of the needy. It has, in short, so many recommendations, that it should be preserved from the fate of most novelties, which are allowed to fade into disuse, the more rapidly as they are adopted and launched into with eagerness. Let it be a custom among us which we "will not willingly let die." Now for the conduct of the game.

The mistress of the house who desires to set up a lottery, should have provided before-hand a number of fancy articles, toys, and elegant nicknackeries of various descriptions; and among these should be prepared one in particular destined to the discomfiture of some luckless expectant. This lot should be carefully enveloped in several wrappers of tissue paper and well laid up in cotton, and may consist of any absurd and childish, or worthless article. It should be placed the last according to the law of gradation observed with respect to the remaining lots, set out upon a table, and left uncovered. When the time of drawing has arrived, the master of the house takes a pack of cards, which he distributed among the drawers, according to their several wishes—an agreed price being set upon each card. When this is done, he takes another pack, from which a number of cards are drawn without being looked at, equal to the number of lots, and one is placed under each. He then turns up the remainder of the pack, laying down each

card in succession and calling it out. The drawer who has a similar card to the one called out, places his beside it. When the whole are thus gone through, those who remain holders of cards corresponding to those under the lots, are declared the winners; but of what, remains to be seen. The card under each lot is called out, beginning with the first; and the drawer who holds a similar one, carries off the lot. Thus in succession through all the lots, until the last, or the great "sell" lot.

So much for the technical arrangement of the game; now let us sketch its dramatic effect—the movement and excitement to which it gives rise. As one by one the cards in the drawers hand are proclaimed worthless, the laugh at their disappointment stimulates them to make another venture, and a general bidding takes place for those that remain; and as their number diminishes, and the consequent probability of any one of them becoming a prize proportionately increases, they fetch higher and still higher prices. The anxiety—the mingled hope and fear with which all eyes are fixed on the card about to be turned up, are emotions which not the coolest and soberest of the company can guard against; and when at last, the lots are distributed to the winners, the trepidation of each, lest his prize entitle him to the honour of contributing to the general mirth by being presented with the "sell," and having deliberately to unfold layer after layer of paper and wool until he reaches the kernel of the mortifying joke which is cracked against him.

The mistress of the house retains from the proceeds of the lottery the cost of the various articles drawn for, and the remainder is devoted to some charitable purpose.

This plan is by far preferable to that of requesting the invited guest to contribute articles; this has the appearance of levying a tax in kind which might not be kindly taken, especially as many would be afraid to bring anything that might be considered poor or worthless. Another rock ahead to be avoided is selling the cards at too high a price, which may be distasteful to the pockets or temper of many of the players. The more rich and generous will always have an opportunity of displaying these qualities by subsequently bidding for the chances of other players.

GET OUT OF THAT.

This is one of those games to which we have alluded as being emblematic of some features of the every-day world—where each, in the struggle for a higher place, strives to supplant another, and inwardly wishes him to "get out of that," that he may succeed to his advantages. Its principle is likewise the same which sets agoing the wheels of our great political machine—or rather its wheel, for, like a barrow, it should have only one—the common wheel. The prime minister being the *fellow* in the centre; and his party in the house, the *spokesmen* whose tendency, like the gentleman's in Joe Miller's renowned anecdote, is certainly to *tire*, as well as to turn.

Our business, however, is not with political parties; nor does the mode in which they have practised the game of "Get out of that" time out of mind, require any description. In evening parties it proceeds thus:—The players seat themselves in a circle, with the exception of one who is deprived of his seat and stands in the centre. He is not content, however, to remain thus unprovided, and very unceremoniously proceeds to remedy his position. Advancing towards some one person in the circle, of whose seat he desires to possess himself, he politely requests him or her to "get out of that." To the natural answer, "What for?" he replies with perfect candour, "Because you have such and such a thing (naming something), and I have not." Whereupon the person so singled out, is obliged to get up and resign the coveted seat, and obtain another by adopting precisely the same course. To render the game more animated, it is advisable to have two persons left standing—one of each sex—the lady addressing herself to the gentlemen, and vice versa. The players should take care they have not about them that which they name, as exclusively possessed by the person whom they address, and that they do not mention anything which has previously been named. A gentleman wishing to displace a lady, would designate her necklace, her ringlets, her founcies, her bracelets, in short all the constituent parts of her toilet; while the lady would, in the same manner, refer to the gentleman's waistcoat, boots, studs, &c. If the game were limited to this, however, it would soon grow wearisome, and the players would be tempted to tell each other, in reference to it, to "Get out of that." A certain amount of fancy and playful invention may be grafted on it, by introducing certain mental or personal qualities, real or imputed. As, for instance, a gentleman might request a lady to give up her place because she had an enchanting mixture of captivating grace and touching innocence, to the possession of which he could never aspire;—and, on the other hand, a lady might unseat a gentleman on the plea that he was possessed of an amount of self-conceit and impudence which she would be very sorry to share with him. These little compliments may be varied in infinite ways, and sweetened or salted to the palate of the individual addressed—care being taken, however, to avoid wounding the susceptibilities of any one.

THE LOTTERY OF ADVICE.

There is another game which is susceptible of a philosophical application. Is not advice ever a lottery? When we ask it—a lottery, whether it will be worth having; when we give it—a lottery whether we shall be thanked for our pains, or our advice will be followed? Like physic, advice is frequently most unpalatable when most salutary; but as in the game about to be described chance directs the stroke, if any such home-thrust be received, the wound soon heals, not, according to the surgical phrase, by the first intention, but by the want of any intention at all.

To play this game you prepare your advice ready cut and dry on small slips of paper, mingling occasional blanks therewith, and jumbling them all together in a little bag. The person who takes charge of the bag and hands it round for each of the assembled company to dip into, must ask the person about to draw "What do you think of this advice?" The drawer must reply—"I think it is pleasant, or disagreeable, or well-judged, or blank." The slip is then unfolded, and if the character of its contents has not been correctly guessed at, a forfeit is paid. This is generally the case; and when, moreover, the advice contained in the slip takes a satirical turn, not a little mirth is excited. We subjoin a few specimens of the sort of advice which may be given.

1. If you took as much pains to conceal the deficiencies inside your head as you do outside, your conversation would appear less bold.
2. If you were less sure of pleasing, you would be more sure to please.
3. Your attentions to a certain young lady amount to persecution—your only chance of winning her approval is to leave them off.
4. As abstinence is easier than moderation; you had better hold your tongue altogether.
5. If you do not decide among your many admirers, it will be said that you are devoid of mind, or you would make it up.

THE SHOEMAKER'S SHOP.

The person who conducts this game, and is the disciple of St. Crispin himself, is honoured with the title of master, takes his seat in the centre of the circle formed by the other players, all of whom select some object or utensil appertaining to the trade of a shoemaker, which they are to represent—as, for instance, the awl, the waxed thread, the last, the leather-knife, the sole, the leather, the shoes, the boots, the nails, the hammer; and even the names of persons and things more indirectly concerned, may be adopted—such as money, a customer, a shoe-binder, &c.

Whenever, in the course of the game, the name adopted by one of the players is mentioned, he must immediately take the cue, and make some observation introducing the name of another object, who must chime in after the same fashion. Whenever the word shop is used, all the players must rise from their seats and say, "Well! let us all go!" and they are not allowed to resume their seats until they have been mentioned each in turn. When it is required to bring the game to a close the master says, "I shut up shop!" We may give the following as an example of the manner in which it may be played.

The Master. What's the matter with you? You look all in the dumps, shoe-binder!

Shoe-binder. Well! isn't it enough to make one look so, to be all day here, binding shoes?

Shoes. You'd find it harder if you had to stitch leather.

Leather. I don't know about that; she'd earn more money.

Money. Yes, indeed; ah! without me, I should like to know what would become of the master?

Master. You're a very necessary thing to be sure, but you're dependent on the leather-knife.

Leather-knife. That's right, show that purse proud fellow that he is not everything. Why he hasn't so much merit as the waxed-thread.

Waxed-thread. You think yourself my betters I suppose; why you're not even equal to the last.

Last. Though last, not least. Remember I support the boots.

Boots. You don't support me any more than the sole.

Sole. I'd soon be off if I wasn't made to stick to it by those cursed nails.

Nails. And wouldn't I too, if I wasn't driven to it by the hammer.

Hammer. I wouldn't move if it wasn't for the master.

Master. Here's a pretty to-do. When once pride gets into your heads it's all up with the shop.

All (getting up). Well! let's all go.

Master. Stop, you stupid dunderheads. You'll all be sorry for it. The nails (nails sits down) won't know what to do without the sole (sole sits down). The leather (leather sits down) will hang dreadfully on hand without the awl (awl sits down), and the leather-knife; and how the boots would droop without the last, and the shoebinder's heart would be in her shoes when she found there was no money.

All the players thus named in succession resume their seats. Any blunders or omissions are of course visited with forfeits.

THE MAGIC WAND.

This is not so much a game as an elaborate trick requiring some preparation; and, like all similar amusements, it can only be performed once in the same party, as once the trick is known, it can give rise to no more forfeits—one great source of pleasure being, according to the Rochefoucault maxim, in the misfortune of our friends: the amusement subsides to dullness. The chief actor or wizard, who wields the magic wand, must select two or three confederates, whom he initiates into the mysteries of his art. He then makes himself up with a shawl for a robe, a conical paper cap on his head, huge spectacles, and, in short, all the conventional appointments of a Zazkiel; and, standing in the middle of the room, commences tracing imaginary circles in the air and on the floor with his wand, and muttering any high-sounding rigmarole. After a moment of profound reflection, he then touches one of his confederates with the extremity of his wand, and commands him to go and place himself at the other end of the room, and when there to close his eyes with both hands. The confederate obeys, making a low bow, and, turning towards the company to show that he is securely blindfolded. The wizard then bids him collect his faculties, and endeavour to guess on which person the wand shall rest. He then touches several persons lightly with the wand on the shoulder, exclaiming each time, "The wand moves," "the wand moves;" and, at last, resting it on the shoulder of the person who had spoken last, cries, "The wand rests!" The confederate will immediately name the individual thus pointed out, who is a confederate also, and purposely speaks last. He then takes the place of the first confederate, and the wizard moves his wand round as previously; his accomplices, without any appearance of design, exciting the company to talk. Silence is then enjoined, and the magician's wand is laid on the shoulder of the last speaker, who is immediately named by the blindfolded confederate, whose place he then takes, and, in his vain attempts to guess in turn on whom the magic wand is resting, pays an unlimited amount of forfeits. Chance may, perhaps favour him; and he is succeeded by another equally gifted seer who furnishes another abundant crop of forfeits. The magician, himself, may subsequently assume the part of the seer, and resign his wand to a confederate, while he astonishes the assembly by the correctness of his divination. This feat, when skilfully performed, never fails of exciting the organ of wonder in the audience to an extraordinary degree; while numbers will imagine they have discovered the secret, and seek to put their supposed discovery into practice—producing so many forfeits that it will be found difficult to dispose of them. The company may have their revenge when the trick is at last explained by clamouring for the burning of the witches or sorcerers, and, according as the dupe-makers are ladies or gentlemen, they are condemned to the extreme punishment of being kissed by all the gentlemen, or of singing a song, or performing some other act of penitence.

JACK'S ALIVE.

This is an old game and one that furnishes no occasion for the display of ready wit; in fact, it would be impossible to find the smallest peg whereon to hang an impromptu. Nor do we mention it on account of its novelty or intellectual merits; but because it furnishes another similitude to the ways of the world. "Jack," the lighted scrap of paper which is passed round while still "alive" from hand to hand, and brings down confusion on the luckless one in whose hand it expires, has its prototype in many a famished pauper or union Jack who is hurriedly thrust on from parish to parish while yet the spark of life is in him, lest it expire within its bounds and bring obloquy on its authorities. The resemblance is a melancholy one; but like the skeleton in the Egyptian festivals, let it teach a lesson and remind us to contribute to Jack's Christmas cheer, that he may be kept alive till better luck befall.

THE HEALTH OF CARDINAL PUFF.

Among the forfeit games we may mention one with the above title, which we have never yet seen described in any collection, English or French. Whence it is derived, we have never been able to discover, nor to what particular Cardinal allusion is made under the name of Puff; though, had it been less ancient we might have made a shrewd guess. Certain it is, however, that the inventor of the game could have been no very enthusiastic admirer of the Cardinal in question, or he would not have rendered it so difficult and arduous a task to drink his health. The candidate for the honour of drinking the health of Cardinal Puff, is accommodated with a chair, a table, and a glass of wine; and if he can, he goes through the following complicated ceremonial. He first proclaims aloud, "I drink the health of Cardinal Puff," and takes his glass up with his thumb and one finger on the stem, takes one sip, and sets the glass down; then, with the first finger of each hand, he strokes the corresponding side of his upper lip, as though smoothing his moustache, raps successively once on the upper edge of the table, once on the under edge, rises once on his seat, and stamps once with each foot successively. This is Part One of the ceremony. Part Two he commences by saying "I drink the health of Cardinal Puff!" taking the glass up this time with two fingers, sipping twice, setting the glass down twice, and so on using two fingers and doing twice throughout as was done only once in Part Three, and last, consists in saying "I drink to the health of Cardinal Puff! Puff! Puff!" taking the glass up between the thumb and three fingers, drinking off its contents, striking the edge of the glass on his left thumb nail thrice, after the ancient fashion of quaffing *supernaculum*, setting the glass down thrice, stroking his moustache thrice with three fingers of each hand, rapping thrice with three fingers first on the upper then on the under edge of the table, rising thrice on his seat and stamping thrice with each foot successively. To set the game going, it is necessary that some one should have rehearsed the feat so as to be perfect in it, and thus be in a position to set the example to be followed by those who think their observation and memory good enough to go through with it. The attempt is almost invariably a failure, as something is sure to be altered or omitted in the strict order of the ceremonial; and for each of these breaches a forfeit is exacted, and the health-drinker recommences until he finally achieves the feat without a blunder.

THE COCK AND BULL STORY.

Some degree of readiness of invention and fancy is necessary in the person who is selected to conduct this game, and who is called the story-teller, and sits in the midst of the other players: each of whom adopts some particular trade or calling—the gentlemen, for instance, that of an ironmonger, a butcher, a carpenter, an apothecary, a shoemaker, a pastry-cook, &c.; and the ladies, that of a milliner, a haberdasher, a flower girl, &c. The story-teller then informs them, that when, in the course of the story he is about to tell them, he fixes his eyes on any one of them, that person must immediately name some object or article appertaining to the trade or profession chosen by him or her, and that without hesitation or repeating what has been named before: any infraction of this rule entailing a forfeit. The story-teller himself pays a forfeit, and yields his place to a successor, if he break down or commit any blunder in telling his story. To show the absurd effect that may be produced by this arrangement, we will suppose the story-teller to commence thus:—

"Once upon a time a poor fisherman was seized by the press-gang, and sent to sea. He left behind him an affectionate wife and two dear little children, whom he loved most tenderly. Their sorrow at being thus separated may be more easily imagined than described. Months rolled

(looking at the pastrycook)

"Sausage Rolls!"

children, whom he loved most tenderly. Their sorrow at being thus separated may be more easily imagined than described. Months rolled

on; but, far from consoling the poor sailor's wife, time only added to her grief, for she received no tidings of her husband, who had left her quite unprovided with (looking at the carpenter)—

"Shavings!"

money. In spite of hard work, she was often unable to set a little (looking at the apothecary)—

"Sp. rinaeti ointment!"

bread before the children. One day, a poor man with a patch over one eye, and who appeared worn out with fatigue, came to her door, and asked for (looking at the ironmonger)—

"A flat iron!"

a night's lodging. The poor woman hesitated, but reflecting that she had nothing to steal, con-ented; telling him at the same time she was sorry she could not offer him any (looking at the haberdasher)—

"Tape!"

supper. The stranger said he did not mind; all he wanted was (looking at the milliner)—

"A stomacher!"

to rest himself. So she made him up some (looking at the apothecary)—

"Pills!"

straw in the corner of the room, and retired for the night with her (looking at the flower girl)—

"Tulips!"

children. In the middle of the night she heard a strange noise, and looking through a chink in the door, saw the man sitting up, counting out a bag full of (looking at the carpenter)—

"Sawdust!"

gold. Her heart beat at the sight, as she thought how happy a little of it would make her, and all sorts of wicked thoughts came into her (looking at the haberdasher)—

"Stockings!"

head. However, she sighed, and stole back to her bed. In the morning the man got up, and, thanking her, proceeded on his journey, but not without making her a handsome (looking at the milliner)—

"Pelisse!"

bow. She looked wistfully after him, for she had expected he would at least have given her a few (looking at the flower girl)—

"Daffodils!"

pence. On turning round, disappointed at his meanness, what should she see in the corner where he had lain but his (looking at the butcher)—

"Call's head!"

bag of gold. Again the tempter prompted her to break one of the Commandments; but she resisted, and, seizing the (looking at the ironmonger)—

"Gridiron!"

bag, ran after him. She soon overtook him, and returned him his treasure. Upon which the poor man tore off his (looking at the apothecary)—

"Blister!"

patch, and exclaimed, "Behold! your long lost (looking at the shoemaker)—

"Highlows!"

husband. The delighted wife fell into her husband's (looking at the pastry-cook)—

"Custard!"

arms, and they returned home arm-in-arm. The children jumped with delight about their papa, and were still more overjoyed when they were told they should have a good dinner, and might order what they liked. The dinner showed great diversity of tastes, for it consisted of (looking at all the players)—

"Tenpenny nails, cleavers, chisels, gallipots, top-boots, mantillas, jelly-bags, nightcaps, and polyanthus."

The story may be drawn out in this fashion according to the fancy of the story-teller, and the taste of the players.

THE PHILHARMONIC CONCERT.

If music is the food of love, noise in this game is the food of fun, and none whose nerves are susceptible, or whose ears are at all delicately strung, should come within a mile of where it is being played. It proceeds in the manner and form following:—The players seat themselves and form a circle after the manner of the military band in Kensington Gardens, each adopting an instrument of which he is the imaginary performer. One chooses the violin, and draws his right hand backward and forward over his extended left arm; another the horn, and puffs out his cheeks, imitating the acting of a horn-player; another the piano, and strums with his hands upon his knees; another the harp, taking a chair or any other suitable piece of furniture to figure as an Erard;—and so on through as many instruments as there are performers, some of them being absurdly out of place in an orchestra, such as a jew's-harp, pan-pipes, and a hurdy-gurdy. Drums, tambourines, cymbals, triangles, and all sorts of noisy instruments may be introduced if the assembly be numerous enough, and add marvellously to the general effect. Each player must imitate the action, and, as well as he is able, the sound proper to the instrument on which he is supposed to be an executant, adopting any particular tune best suited to its peculiar character; and the utmost ardour and enthusiasm must be thrown into the various gestures of the performers. The spectacle which is then presented by this orchestra of imaginary musicians, all playing, *con furore*, is irresistibly ludicrous, and renders the gravity, which is prescribed on pain of a forfeit, a sheer impossibility. In the midst of the circle the conductor takes his post, a-straddle on a chair, with the back before him, in such a sort as to figure a desk, on which he beats time. He may get himself up after the similitude of the great Monsieur Julien; whose attitudes and gestures, at the most excited pitch of his last "universal smash" polka, may be adopted as a model, but will need no exaggeration to be made as amusing as those of the orchestra which he directs. In the midst of the indescribable confusion of sounds over which he triumphantly presides, the conductor suddenly singles out one of the performers, and asks him why he is at fault. The individual so addressed must at once, and without a moment's hesitation, give some answer corresponding to the nature of his instrument:—for instance, the fiddler may say his bow wanted rosin, the harp-player that one of the strings had broken, the clarinet-player that his instrument was broken-winded. Any failure to do this, or any repetition of an excuse previously given, entails a forfeit.

THE DOCTOR.

To play this game it is not necessary, as might be supposed, to have taken a degree, or to have passed the College of Surgeons. The prescriptions of our doctor are distributed hap-hazard like those of the ingenious medical gentleman mentioned in the preface of Don Guzman d'Alfarache, who carried a large assortment about in a bag, and when consulted, pulled out the first that came to hand, which he delivered to the patient, piously ejaculating, "Heaven send you a good one." The individual who personates the doctor, takes his place to the right of the semicircle formed by the other players who are all presumed to be his patients. Beginning with the one next to him, he gives a consultation to each in succession, going through the usual business of feeling the pulse, poking the ribs, and auscultating, and asking questions, as to their various complaints—the origin of which he attributes to any absurd cause, such as over eating, love, catching cold from talking to a very frigid young lady, &c. He must pronounce it to be something with a very hard crack-jaw name, real or manufactured—as for instance, *elephantiasis*, *peripneumonia*, and prescribe a number of drugs with equal unpronounceable designations, at the same time taking down a note of each prescription. When he has gone through the whole number, he calls upon one of the players to tell him what is the matter with any of his patients whom he names and what he should advise as a remedy. The person so called on must repeat exactly the name given to the patient's complaint, and the drugs prescribed. If he is plucked in his examination, which is generally as sure to be the case as though he were before a board of real examiners, a forfeit is the penalty. The painful efforts of those who are uninitiated to the hard words which medical men bandy with each other, to retain and pronounce them, and the ludicrous way in which some are distorted, will make the doctor's visit more amusing than it is generally found.

THE LOVERS' EXERCISE.

The gentleman who has to perform the part of drill sergeant selects a lady, and places himself in the centre of the room; the other gentlemen, likewise, choose a partner, and range themselves in a line before

the first couple. The sergeant then advances towards the troops, and, with a military accent, gives the following words of command:—"Eyes right!" "Attention!" "Take ladies' hands!" "Arms round ladies' waists!" "Right-about face!" "Make ready!" "Present!" "Fire!" The sergeant executes every movement himself as he commands it, and at the last very intelligible figure of speech, salutes his lady—the same manoeuvre being performed by the whole of the troops. The effect is extremely martial and inspiring.

TUNING THE ORGAN.

The person who has to enforce this penance takes the part of the organist, and condemns the penitent to perform that of his assistant. Both stand in the centre of the circle, and request the ladies to stand upright on their chairs. When they have complied, they are told that they must consider themselves *organ pipes*. The organist then says, there is to be a grand musical festival to-morrow, and he must tune his organ. So saying, he presses one finger of his left hand against the left side of his nose, and utters a long nasal sound, which he endeavours to make as like as he can to that of a tuneless organ-pipe. The lady towards whom he advances while discoursing this eloquent music, must answer him in the same tone, and imitating his action, which she will find it difficult to do with suitable gravity. "That won't do," says the organist, with a profoundly knowing air. "That's not the note." Then turning to the penitent, he tells him to set that pipe right. The process of setting the pipe right, consists in taking the lady up in his arms and transferring her to another chair. The organist repeats the same performance with another lady; imposing on the assistant the same laborious task until every lady has been moved from her chair, when the assistant, who is nearly dead with fatigue, is happy to hear that the organ is tuned.

IT WAS I.

The person on whom this penance is imposed, must arm himself with the most impenetrable stoicism, for he will have to run the gauntlet through a fire of sarcasms, and satirical innuendoes, to which he is obliged to lay himself open, and must actually point the weapon against his own breast, in a self-torturing spirit, worthy of a Hindu or a Catholic penitent. His task is simply to ask every player in succession, "What did you see this morning, or this evening—in the street or at the play?" and so on. To the answer which is given, whatever it may be, he is bound to answer "It was I." Thus if it be, "I saw a gentleman who, bought at other persons' valuation, and sold at his own, would realise a handsome fortune;" or, "I saw a man sneaking down an area to make cupboard love to the cook;" or "I saw a monkey playing tricks on an organ"—to all he must make the same humiliating confession. Happy and favoured may he deem himself if, while in this pillory of topsy-turvy compliments, some fair hand throw him a delicate bouquet, instead of a bad egg.

THE PRUSSIAN SOLDIER.

This penance is peculiarly a gentleman's, and is one of the least satisfactory to the performer. Why the military gentleman who is called upon to perform so accommodating a part for his friends, should be a Prussian, is not easy to see—unless, perhaps, because he is likely to look rather blue during the proceeding. The penitent must accoutre himself in the best way he can; taking a stick, or any other convenient implement to represent a musket. He must then, without uttering a word, place himself before one of the ladies, present arms to her, and stamp twice or thrice with his feet on the ground. The lady must immediately get up and follow the soldier, who conducts her to the other

end of the apartment, where he leans his ear towards the lady, who whispers in it the name of any gentleman on whom she has fixed her mind. The soldier then proceeds with the same gravity, and observing the same strict silence, towards the gentleman, to whom he presents arms, accompanying the ceremony by stamping on the floor as before. The gentleman rises and joins the lady, accompanied by the soldier, who, when she has been saluted by the gentleman, conducts her to her place, presents arms, and returns to receive the gentleman's orders. This goes on through a series of gallant invitations obsequiously conveyed by the soldier, until some lady takes pity on him and invites him to become the favoured party, when he immediately puts down his musket, salutes the lady, and conducts her back to her seat.

THE LEARNED PIG.

The person whose privilege it is to enforce the penance of the learned pig, may reserve for himself the part of the master of that wonderful animal, or may select any other member of the assembly who is likely to acquit himself of the task with most effect. The impersonator of the learned pig must walk upon all fours, and must obey the commands of his master, imitating the gait and grunt of that interesting quadruped to the best of his mimetic powers; while the master must introduce him to the assembly with all the usual jargon and flourish of a showman. "This, ladies and gentlemen, is the celebrated learned pig, Toby, of which you've all read so much in the *Times* newspaper. He has been offered the situation of editor of that journal, and likewise private secretary to Prince Albert; but refused these handsome offers, preferring to travel about in a caravan like the wild Arab of the desert. He was made a Doctor of Civil Law on account of his general acquirements and knowledge of the world, and corresponds with all the learned societies of Europe. He can read the human heart like a playbill, and will tell the age of any lady more correctly than the lady herself. Now, Mr. Toby, please to point out which of these young ladies is most fond of flirting." The learned pig has then to go round, carefully examining all the ladies in succession, grunting and sniffing at them with his snout, and finally squatting himself down before one of them. This proceeding is generally accompanied by roars of laughter at the expense of the lady who receives this unenviable distinction. The master may, in the same manner, call upon the learned pig to point out the acute gentleman who left, an evening party, taking away a new hat, and leaving an old one, and so on; fixing as many playful charges on the company as may be found entertaining. The quadrupedal attitude of the learned pig will generally suggest as brief a display of his sagacity as possible.

THE DEAF MAN.

This penance is almost as severe and mortifying as the last. The person on whom this temporary infirmity is imposed must stand out in the middle of the room, and to all that is said must answer three times following: "I am deaf; I can't hear!" The fourth time, however, the answer must be "I can hear." The fun to all but the unfortunate victim is for the first three times to make the deaf man some very agreeable proposal, such as bringing a lady to him and asking him to salute her, to which he is obliged to turn a deaf ear; while the fourth time he is requested to perform some humiliating act, such as to take a lady to another gentleman to salute, sing a comic song, recite extempore verses in praise of the lord mayor, dance a hornpipe, &c.; and to all these agreeable invitations his ears must be suddenly open. In fact, he must illustrate exactly the inverse of the old proverb, "none so deaf as those who won't hear." He is not obliged to accede to the requests that are made to him in the intervals of his deaf fit. This would be too severe.



A CHRISTMAS MAZE.

The instructions for this seasonable fire-side amusement are as follow:—The Traveller must enter at the opening at the foot, and must pass between the lines forming the road to the Castle in the middle. There are no bars in the route: one road crosses another by means of a bridge, so that care must be taken that, in following the route, the traveller does not stray from one road to another, and thus lose the

track. For instance, on entering, he will have to pass under a bridge of another road crossing over his path; in continuing the route he will next pass over a bridge crossing another road, and thus continue his course. A little practice will accustom the traveller to the method of the Maze. It is not a fair test of the merits of the Maze to commence from the centre; but the traveller will be at full liberty, when he has entered the Castle, to get out again if he can.

THE VILLAGE WAITS.

BY MRS. T. K. HERVEY.

THE village world is all a-tune:

The bees are singing in their hives ; *

This one blest night beneath the moon

The silenced robin's note revives ;

* It was an ancient superstition that on Christmas-eve the bees sang in their hives.

The loud winds, hushed—in love, not fear—
Sink whispering round the holly-stem,
Soft as when toned on Christ's own ear
Each angel voice of Bethlehem.

On such an eve the strains that pour
From every lowly hamlet spire,
From village street, or cottage door,
The wearied wings of echo tire:
The storm-bowed sailor on the deep,
And sea-rocked babes, and aged men,

Shall hear sweet carols in their sleep,
And midst their dreamings cry—"Amen!"

On such an eve each upward look
Is voiceful as a breathing sound ;
And sighs from many a household nook
Turn prayers upon the hallowed ground .
A once dark world, made pure as snow,
Shows white to heaven ; and Heaven shall hear
The faintest murmur of her woe,
The lightest dropping of her tear.



THE VILLAGE WAITS.—DRAWN BY E. FOSTER.

Young men and maidens shall go sing,
And children, that, with new-sprung heart,
Are Christ's beloved . earth shall ring
His praise who hath no counterpart ;
Who pitieth the pitiless,
Who weepeth where the mourners weep,
Who turneth not from guilt's distress,
Who walketh on the unstained deep !

Sound, sound with voice, and sound with string,
Through this night's moon, and morrow's sun ;
Bid ransomed souls their offerings bring,
Till music and deep prayer are one !
Through all the hours glad anthems swell
To hail on earth the Christ new-found,
And call the witness-stars to tell
How God's full day of love was crowned !

O! sacred love, and sacred song,
Glad stars, and music-breathing night,
Go hand-in-hand—a rapturous throng—
A glorious band in God's great sight !
Mute aspect of the holy earth
Be mute no more, but holier still—
Throned in the light of this new birth—
This offspring of Divinest Will !



THE CHRISTMAS MARKET-WAGGON.—DRAWN BY E. DUNCAN.

Of the many loads of produce which gladden the heart of the beholder at various periods of the year, there is none more welcome than the wagon laden with produce for Christmas cheer, crowned, as in the accompanying picture, with a vast bush of Holly and Mistletoe—redolent of holy joy and ancient homage of the season, the heartiest observance in

the Calendar. There is a sort of rude music in the very wheels of the wagon, as they roll along the hardened road, perchance aided by the bells upon the horses. But the mind's eye rises to the crowning glory of the Holly—the plant which constitutes so beautiful a feature in the winter scenery of England, and whose scarlet or yellow berries

render it so universal a decoration of churches (hence the name Holy-tree) and dwelling-houses at Christmas time. This custom may be to commemorate the victory gained over the powers of darkness by the coming of Christ; and the gathering of Mistletoe is a relic of Druidic worship.



CHRISTMAS WEATHER:—SNOWBALLING.—FROM A PICTURE BY G. DODGSON, IN THE EXHIBITION OF THE SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS.—(SEE NEXT PAGE.)

SNOWBALLING.

BY EDMUND H. YATES.

Oh! wearied with this daily grind,
This wear and tear of brain and mind,
This conflict with the world unkind,
I pity him who does not find
Some pleasure in a school;
Who does not in each youthful scene
Recall some thoughts which once have been
His chief delight; the village green
On which he played (although I ween,
Perchance, but played the fool).

The cricket-ground, the wall for five,
The bumping-block (oh! he who strives
For gain within these human hives
Will find, if he the fight survives,
Even rougher bumps than those);
And, more than all, the garden mound,
Whereon he took his "vantage ground,"
And gathered ruddy troops around,
To fight among the snows.

The sides are ranged, the ground is planned,
The wall is built; behind it stand
The troops defensive, such a band!
Each boy a snowball in his hand,
And valour in his eye;
Each is prepared the worst to brave—
For courage comes before we shave,
What British boy would be a slave
When "Forward" is the cry?

And now the rival troops engage,
Besiegers mimic warfare wage;
Jack Willson, the astute and sage,
Contrives by tricks, in Gamp called "bage,"
To gain the rampart wall:
Ha, ha! he's down; the boaster proud!
For Tomkinson, 'mid laughter loud,
Pushes him backward 'mongst the crowd,
Which does but jeer his fall.

Stragglers from either side are out,
Peppering with balls each country lout,
Each red-cloaked dame, or farmer stout—
Respecting not the beadle's gout,
French teacher's execrations!
His "mille diables!" he may roar,
"C'est nom!" and "sacre!" forth may pour,
He but receives a dozen more,
To show the love of nations.

You call it mischief! Is our life
So truly free from party strife,
From broils so clear, of peace so rife,
That gun and pistol, sword and knife,
Are things to us unknown.
Have we such feeling for distress?
Is fun mixed with our bitterness?
Do we, though fighting, love not less
The hand ranked 'gainst our own?

For my part, no! The daily grind
Is more severe, the friends less kind;
More hard the wear and tear of mind;
Less pleasant sympathy I find
Than when I was at school:
Then wonder not my thoughts have strayed,
To what is in this sketch portrayed,
One of the games at which I played—
Perchance though, played the fool.

PRINCESS ILSE.

A CHRISTMAS TALE OF THE HARTZ MOUNTAINS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY L. F. SIMPSON.

At the time of the Flood, when all the waters of the earth rushed together, climbed the hills, and with their waves rolled above the highest mountain-tops, there was a fearful disorder among the waters; and when, finally, the Lord took compassion upon the poor Earth, and allowed the clear light of heaven to break through the grey veil of the clouds, and commanded the waters to separate from each other and find their way back into their valleys, surely neither stream nor streamlet could have found its own old bed had not legions of kind angels descended upon earth and led them carefully into the right path.

As the summits of the mountain ranges gradually appeared from out the flood, the angels descended on all sides, slowly, into the valleys, driving the waters before them. And as they descended, deeper and deeper, they organised the course of rivers and streams, defined the limits of the sea, and enclosed the lakes within rocky boundaries, or green belts of wood and meadow. With broad brooms and besoms of sunbeams they swept along the damp earth, brushed the mud off the grasses, dried the heavy foliage of the trees; and so busily were they employed over their work, that the clouds of watery dust they stirred up hung like a veil of mist in the gulleys of the mountains.

Their labour had lasted many days, and was nearly completed, when a weary Angel sat resting himself upon one of the highest points of the Alps. The spot commanded a wide prospect towards north and south, towards east and west; and the Angel looked thoughtfully down upon the green Earth, which had risen again so fresh and lovely from out the flood of Sin. "How beautiful it is!" he thought—"how glorious in its purity!—but will it always remain so pure? Will not all the misery and filth of Sin, which has been washed away by these great waters, again accrue? Will the black finger of Sin never again leave its dark impress upon the fair countenance of the purified Earth?" A deep prophetic sigh heaved in the breast of the good Angel, and he turned away his dazzled eyes from the morning sun, which, blood-red, was rising in the horizon. He cast a long look on the side where the streams of Germany had taken their downward path. He saw them gliding along in the distance: the great rivers in the van, the smaller streams following them, and a legion of streamlets and rivulets joyously hurrying on in the rear. He rejoiced to see how well they were led—how all disorder had vanished, and how every stream and source, however small and unimportant, had been attended by some kind angel, who had directed it what course to take, when, with doubt and hesitation, it had run aside, and carefully guarded it when it too thoughtlessly bounded over the rocks. He saw the jovial Rhine, wreathed with vine-leaves, hastening along; and he fancied he heard in the distance his exulting shout as he greeted his beloved Moselle, who, wreathed with grapes also, came, blushing as a bride, to meet him.

Onward and onwards the waters rolled—their splash and roar echoed in the distance, when the solitary angel on the mountain top was suddenly startled by another sound. He heard a violent sobbing and gentle splashing close to him. He arose, and, turning the corner of a rock from whence the sound proceeded, he found a young water-spring, wrapped in a white veil, bubbling and sobbing bitterly, lying upon the ground. With compassion he bent over her, and having raised her gently and put aside her veil, he recognised the little Ilse, for whom a green bed had been prepared low down in the valleys of the Hartz. "Poor child," said the kind Angel, "have you been left here all alone on the rough rocks?—have all the others left, and not one of them thought of taking you along with them?" Little Ilse tossed her head, and piteously replied, "I have not been forgotten—old Mistress Weser* waited for me a long time, and beckoned and called to me to come; and Ecker and Ocker† wanted to take me with them, but I would not go with them, even should I have to perish here all alone. Shall I descend into the valleys, like a common streamlet, to do service in the plains, to quench the thirst of oxen and sheep, and wash their clumsy feet—I, the Princess Ilse! Only look at me—if I am

not of the noblest race! My father is a sunbeam, and the pure air my mother; my brother is the diamond, and my beloved darling little sister is the dewdrop on the rosebud. The waves of the Flood have carried me up to a giddy height; I have been allowed to wash the snowy crests of the kings of mountains, and the first sunbeam that broke through the clouds has embroidered my dress with spangles. I am a Princess of the purest water, and truly cannot descend into the valley I, therefore, concealed myself, and pretended to be asleep, and old Weser, and the silly rills, who do not know better than to rush into her arms, at last went away mumbling."

The Angel shook his head sadly at the long speech of little Ilse, and looked earnestly and searchingly into her pale little face; and, after gazing firmly into her large, childish blue eyes, which were glistening with anger, he discovered in their clear depths dark spots, and ascertained that a dangerous guest had taken up his abode and played his pranks in the head of little Ilse. The little demon of Pride had taken possession of it, had driven out all pious thoughts, and maliciously grinned at the good angel out of the eyes of poor little Ilse. The little demon of Pride had turned the head of many a silly child, even when not a Princess of the purest water, and the compassionate Angel, aware of the danger she incurred, determined to save Ilse, at all price.

In his eyes, which could see so far, Princess Ilse was only a naughty child, and therefore he did not address her as "your Highness," or "your Grace," but simply as dear Ilse. "Dear Ilse," then said the Angel, "but if it was your own free choice to remain here, and not go with the other waters to the valleys, you ought to be perfectly satisfied at being here, and I cannot understand what you are crying and sobbing about."

"Alas!" replied Ilse, "when the waters had gone away, dear Angel, the whirlwind came here to sweep the mountains, and when he saw me he got into a great rage, he scolded and abused and shook me, and tried to throw me over that rock into a deep dark abyss, where daylight never penetrates. I begged and wept, and trembling pressed myself close up to the rock;—at last I succeeded in escaping from his powerful arms, and hid myself here in this fissure in the rock."

"And as you will not always succeed," said the Angel, "for the whirlwind keeps good order here, and carries a good broom—you must see, dear Ilse, that it was very silly of you to remain here all alone, and you will follow me willingly if I will lead you to good old Weser and your young companions."

"By no means!" exclaimed little Ilse; "I am a Princess, and I will remain here!"

"Ilse," said the Angel, with his mild mellow voice, "dear little Ilse, I mean it well with you, and you must love me also a little, and be a good child. Do you see yon morning cloud floating in the blue heavens? I will tell it to stop here and we will both enter it; you can lay your head on its soft cushions, and I will sit near you; and the cloud will take us down speedily into the quiet valleys, where the other streamlets are. I will there place you in your green bed and remain near you, and I will give you pleasant dreams and tell you amusing tales."

But Princess Ilse was incorrigibly obstinate, and with increased vehemence and disdain, she exclaimed: "No, no, I will not descend, I will not go to the valley;"—and when the Angel approached her and with gentle violence endeavoured to take her in his arms, she struck at him and sported water into his face.

The Angel sat down sadly on the ground, and the silly little Princess retired to the hollow in the rock and congratulated herself at having shown so much spirit, and at having given short and negative answers to the Angel, who once again endeavoured to persuade her to accompany him.

When the good Angel saw that all his loving efforts were of no avail with little Ilse, that the demon of Pride held all her reason captive, he left the lost child with a sigh, and returned to his companions who were still hard at work.

Princess Ilse when she found herself again alone, determined to enjoy her high dignity to the utmost. She glided out of the hole in the rock, placed herself on a projecting point, spread out her vapoury garments in broad folds and hoped that the adjacent mountains would bow to her in homage, and that the clouds would advance towards her and kiss the hem of her garment. But nothing of the sort occurred, however proud her little Highness looked. At last she grew tired of sitting all alone, and felt very sad, and plaintively muttered to herself: "I could have borne a little annoyance, as in keeping with my high station; but even a Princess is not bound to bear so much." And as evening came on, and the sun set, and in the distance the noise of the approaching whirlwind became audible, the poor little Princess shed tears of fear; and although she felt proud at having shown so much firmness in not following the Angel, her self-love, however sweet, did not counterbalance her fear of the whirlwind.

It became darker and darker, thick heavy mists rose from the hollows, thunder rumbled in the distance, and little Ilse thought she would have died from very fear, her breath beat quick in the heavy hot atmosphere around her. Suddenly a pale ray of light flashed in the dark night, and when Ilse looked up trembling, she beheld before her the tall dark figure of a man wrapped in the folds of a large red cloak, who, bowing deeply, thus addressed her: "Most gracious Princess!" Such greeting was sweet music in the ears of little Ilse, and she suppressed her fear of the strange disagreeable figure, and hearkened to the enticing words addressed to her.

The dark man said that he had been for a long time near her, that he had heard her conversation with the Angel, and rejoiced that she had not hearkened to him. He could not understand how any one could propose taking so much loveliness and beauty, so charming a little Princess down to the flat earth and bury her alive in dark valleys. He spoke to her of the splendid future that was in store for her, if she would allow him to serve her; he described a pleasant country seat he possessed on one of the highest and most glorious mountains of Germany; he would take her there, surround her with a brilliant court, and all the splendour and brilliancy due to her high rank; she should there live in joys and pleasures high above all the waters and rivulets of the universe. The heart of little Ilse beat high in joyful expectation of the fulfilment of all these fine promises. And when the strange man threw open his cloak and drew forth a large golden goblet, the stem of which was richly set with jewels, and placed it before the Princess, politely requesting her to step into it, that he might carry her to his beautiful mountain on the Brocken, where numberless maids of honor were already preparing festivals in her honor, her little Highness was so overcome that all consideration vanished. In joyful haste, with both feet at once, she leapt into the golden goblet, so that the waters jumped up and a few drops fell upon the hand of the dark man, where they were immediately scorched up and a burning pain shot through the whole frame of poor little Ilse.

Frightened, the poor child darted towards the rim of the goblet, as if with the intention of jumping out, and looked up timidly into the face of the strange man. But he burst into a hoarse laugh, seized the goblet with a powerful hand, commanded the whirlwind to go on before that little Ilse might not fear its approach, and swift as an arrow, they hastened through the air. And Ilse, as the pain had soon subsided, was quieted, and allowed herself to be carried away. She little thought that she had given herself up to the Evil One, when she jumped into the golden cup which he held out for her. Now and then, it is true, she had qualms of fear as they dashed on through the dark night; and when the goblet was shaken by the rapid motion, little Ilse trembled and huddled close to the polished sides, drew her garments close around her; and took care that not another drop should be spilt—for she knew now what pain it would give her.

The night cleared up, and the moon arose slowly as they arrived at the Brocken. Sounds of revelry and boisterous mirth greeted them; a motley group of wonderful figures was passing to and fro. The Lord of the Brocken commanded silence, placed the cup containing little Ilse upon a great stone, as upon a throne, and bid his gay vassals form a circle round her, and do her homage as Princess of the Waters.

This was a glorious moment for little Ilse, who felt that she was now in her proper place. Proudly she raised herself, in a graceful column of water within the golden goblet, and with dignity graciously greeted those around her, and, half ashamed, hung her little head, when an "oh!" of admiration sounded from the circle. But this was not the hour of humility for Ilse with the demon of Pride in her head. A soft enchanting music resounded, and the delighted little Princess bubbled and danced in the polished vase, shook her waving locks, and let the pearly drops fall back again sparkling into the cup. The good-natured old full Moon, who is not very particular, and shines upon all things, good and bad, could not help placing a wreath of sparkling silver stars

upon the vain child's head, and his broad mouth grinned broader than ever, with intense delight, when little Ilse nodded to him with a sweet smile of thanks. But there were eyes in the Devil's court, which did not look upon the dancing little Ilse with delight and admiration: there was many a little heart in that company which deemed itself the most beautiful and the most charming Princess, and looked upon the triumph of another with jealousy and envy. Two such little witches went quite close up to the golden cup, and mocked little Ilse, and said impertinent things to her face. "See how she twists about, and tries to look graceful," said one; "and she is so thin and vapoury, that you can see through her." "I should like to know how the pale beauty will demean herself when she has to dance with the Whirlwind, and let herself be whirled round by him as we are," said the other, contemptuously, shrugging her shoulders; "and it will take her a life-time to learn how to ride upon a broomstick. But hark! the gongs and cymbals are striking up. We have a merry circle to dance, to stamp the ground, and dry up a morass for a dwelling for the pale Ilse. Then, all her finery will be over, and she must be our most obedient servant as Princess Cooking-water."

Little Ilse, who had heard all that was said, had lost all taste for dancing at the ill-natured speeches of the young Witches. She sat quite quietly at the bottom of the cup, and watched the wild figures as they sallied forth in procession to the other side of the mountain, and formed a circle for dancing, and pondered upon what the taunting words of the bad Witches really meant. The allusion to the Whirlwind had annoyed her considerably; but the morass and Princess Cooking-water were a source of serious alarm to her. No one had hitherto called her Princess Cooking-water; and she, who was to reign here, surely, was not meant to serve the Witches. She already thought of questioning the Lord of the Brocken on the subject, who was just then approaching her; but, before she could speak, he stood near her, and dipped his finger into the middle of the cup, which made little Ilse tremble all over with pain. But the Devil laughed and said: "The night is fresh, most gracious Princess; you are shivering with cold, and will freeze in this flat cup? I am preparing a warm rocking-cradle for you by yonder fire, where you may rest and warm yourself. If you will condescend to turn your bright face in that direction you will see how valiantly my head cook is stirring up the fire, and throwing pretty play-things into your bed, that you may not find time heavy on your hands. Let me carry you over there."

Little Ilse looked in the direction she was told, and beheld a huge iron caldron hung above a blazing fire, which crackled and flamed most lustily. But the old hag who presided over it, was of so hideous and repulsive an aspect, and the toys she threw into the caldron were so extraordinary, that little Ilse, who had already become distrustful, did not allow herself to be carried there at once, and said she should like to look at the dancing a little longer; she enjoyed the fresh air, she said, and the golden goblet answered all the purposes of a balcony; was far enough off not to be annoyed by the dust; and she could see all that was going on, and was very much amused.

The Devil thought he would not disturb her pleasure, and said he would return in an hour and fetch her; and, so saying, he left her, and joined the dancing crew.

The little Princess began to feel very dreary and sad, all alone, as she sat and watched, first the wild gestures of the weird dancers, then the fire and the caldron, into which she now plainly saw that the old hag threw in all sorts of disgusting animals—spiders, and toads, and snakes, and lizards, and bats, which she caught in the air as they hovered over the fire, and cracked their wings before throwing them, with wild gestures, into the caldron. A feeling of intense horror overcame little Ilse at the company she had got into; and when she thought that she would be put in the caldron to warm, it became quite clear to her what the Witches meant when they mocked her, and called her "Princess Cooking-water." In mortal agony she pressed her two tender little hands together, drew her veil close over her pale little face to stifle the scream which rose to her lips from her anguished heart. "Oh!" she sighed, with tears, "had I but followed the Angel! he meant it well with me." And when she had cast a despairing glance around, and saw that she was left all alone on that side of the mountain, that all the witches and demons were dancing on the other side, or hovering round the fire, the thought of flight rushed across her mind. "Away away!" she muttered, "no matter where;" and, quick as the thought, she leaped up to the rim of the goblet, let her white little feet and vapoury garments hang over it; and, still holding fast with both hands, she looked anxiously round to see that no one was watching her.

But no one was paying attention to the little Princess; only the good-natured old Moon stood aloft and smiled at her with unmoved countenance. But she looked up to him with tears in her eyes, with such an imploring childish look—one of her little fingers on her lips—that surely he could never have the heart to betray her, should he by any chance be asked what had become of little Ilse?

As soon as little Ilse was sure that she was unobserved, she let herself drop gently on to the ground. But the goblet was high, and the block of granite, upon which it was placed, still higher, and, with all the precaution in the world, she made a little splash as she touched the ground; and, in great fear, lest she should have been heard, she glided, trembling, under two large stones. She had modestly taken off her wreath of stars, and left it in the cup. Courtly life had been anything but pleasant to her, and now was no time to think of being a Princess, but to endeavour to escape as quietly and expeditiously as possible.

She clung tremblingly close to the stones, and begged of them to protect her; and the old stones, who had never felt such young and beating life against their hard breasts, felt themselves wonderfully touched, and closed around the Princess, so that no eye, not even that of the Moon, could discern her. They then pointed out to her a hole in the earth, and she made herself as slim as she could, and crept into it, and found in the soft cushions of earth which covered the stony ribs of the mountain on that side a long gallery, in all probability the work of some field-mouse. Little Ilse groped her way along it in the dark, and found that the gallery led down the mountain. She had already gone a considerable distance, when the gallery became wider and uneven: it appeared to lead through loose stones, and some turned over beneath her feet, and rolled on before her down the mountain. She still glided on in the dark; but now and then she felt a sharp breath of air through the crevices, and the path, after a very steep declivity, suddenly appeared to terminate altogether, and she beheld the clear sky, with a star glittering here and there, which threw a pale light, and displayed a mass of big and little stones, among which no more path was visible. The wild music and the howling and dancing of the witches of the Brocken again burst upon her ear, and little Ilse who had hesitated for a moment, not knowing which path to take, aroused by these sounds, sprang forward in haste and fear over the stones. She little cared for knocking her head and tearing her garments against the sharp points of the rocks. "Away, away!" she muttered—"far away where the Prince of the Brocken and his wild legions cannot discover me!"

The breaking dawn caused her considerable alarm. "The night is silent," she thought, "and will not betray me; but daylight is a chat-box, and will soon tell which road I have taken." And she crouched into as small a compass as possible, and glided along, under the stones, only peeping out now and then to breathe a little of the fresh morning air.

Between high wooded hills, a deep dark-green gully led down towards the valley, and little Ilse rushed headlong into it. Numberless rocks and stones lay heaped, one upon another, at the bottom of the gully, wound round with the roots of pine-trees or overgrown with moss. They looked severe and very venerable, and did not seem at all inclined to make way for the little rill which came rushing so hastily and suddenly upon them. The kind Creator had taken compassion on poor little Ilse when, driven by fear, she shot over the stones, and had allowed the forest to open its green gates to her, and take her under its protection. The forest is a sacred asylum for children who have gone astray, who have done or thought evil in the world. None of the little evil spirits that find a place in young hearts can accompany them into the peaceful stillness of the woods; the demon of Pride is the very first to be excluded; and how could it exist in the presence of the severe majesty of the lord of the forest, the Pine-tree, which makes no pretensions upon the strength and glory given to him by God, who stands upright with uncovered head towards heaven, whilst storms play around him, firm and immovable upon the spot upon which the Lord placed him, and prefers breaking asunder and dying than to bend to evil wishes, truly a king "by God's grace."

It is true that Ilse did not yet comprehend all this; she thought that the pine-roots were making ugly faces at her, and she timidly guided

* Die Weser—a river.

† Two other rivers.

past them, deeper and deeper into the forest. That the little demon of Pride had silently left her when she ran away from the Devil and his witches on the Brocken; that it swam away in the tears of repentance and fear which she shed;—of all this little Ilse was just as ignorant as she was in her folly when the demon took up his abode within her. But she felt freer and happier in the shade of the green woods, behind the golden rails, which the sun-beams, falling obliquely, cast over the sword. The farther she went from the Brocken, the more at ease and happier did she feel; she already thought that the firs and pines no longer looked at her so darkly and severely as they did higher up; and soon serious, venerable oaks spread their powerful arms over her, and light friendly beeches thrust themselves between the dark firs, nodded to her with a smile, and endeavoured, with outstretched branches, first to catch the sunbeams and to shoot them at each other, like golden arrows. Little Ilse, who, like all children, had soon forgotten her sorrows, ran merrily rippling along between them; and when a sunbeam, in the joyous game, fell to the ground, she picked it up, held it exultingly on high or fastened her veil with it, and then threw it as she sprang forwards, playfully, to the flowers and grasses, which inquisitively stood on her path, and looked after her. She was once again a happy mirthful child; and the green wood delighted in the little run-a-way, to whom he had given shelter. As regards the greater and lesser stones, who, wrapped up in their soft coverings of moss, lay dreaming on the ground—to be sure, all their quiet contemplations were disturbed since little Ilse, splashing, jumped over them; but, nevertheless, they were very good friends with her. When the fattest and heaviest of them came inconveniently in her way, and would not let her pass, she patted the cheeks of the rough old stones with her white little hands, and muttered soft entreaties into their ear. And when that did not answer, she grew angry, stamped impatiently with her little feet, and pushed so powerfully against them, that the old boys were obliged to give way; and, as soon as the slightest aperture was visible, little Ilse rushed into it with all her strength, drove the lazy stones asunder, and shot impetuously a head of them. When the ground became very steep, it was a charming sight to behold how the little Princess hopped, splashing, from rock to rock. On these occasions she put on a neat little cap of white foam; and when it happened that it was broken or crushed against a projecting point of rock, she always had another ready at hand, white as the driven snow of the Alps, and freshly crimped. On many a sunny glade of the mountain, where grass and moss are soft as velvet, and the large trees had separated far from each other, and made room for their young ones, who, scattered in groups here and there, grew, and learnt how to become trees—there sat the young children of the firs on the ground, their stiff bushy green coats spread upon the sward, and thoughtfully nodded with their pointed heads, and wondered how little Ilse never became weary of the continual running and jumping. The very small rills, however, were not so quiet as the fir-children. When they heard little Ilse warbling her soft bubbling song, they came dropping out of the sides of the rock, and glided quietly along through the soft moss, always nearer and nearer to Ilse. Little Ilse had distinctly heard their gentle rippling, and saw them coming, and beckoned them to hasten their steps. And when the little rills saw the little Princess jumping away deep below over the stones, they were frightened, and had not the courage to jump down to her, and yet saw no other way. Little Ilse then addressed them with her clear voice, and encouraged them, and shoved strong stepping-stones, well cushioned with moss, towards them, that they might step over them and reach her. And the rills took courage, and began to climb and jump quite boldly from one stepping-stone to another. Little Ilse caught them in her arms, though some of them did fall clumsily into her lap, and she took them by the hand and said: "Come, you must now run along with me. Look how I do; jump when I jump; I will hold you tightly, that you do not fall." And the rills did as they were bid: they jumped over the big stones, holding Ilse firmly by the hand, did not hurt themselves, and feared no longer; and they soon learnt to run and jump so well, that soon, even when they put on their white caps of foam, they could not be distinguished from Ilse.

The Devil on the Brocken was in a tremendous rage at the flight of the beautiful Princess. He was perfectly aware that so clear a spring was no prey for him; and that the demon of Pride, the surest hold he has upon young minds, had left her; he was at a loss how again to get hold of the mirthful child. He bethought himself of the Whirlwind, which the Princess had always feared; and he called the North-wind, and bade it run up the valley right against the swift little Ilse. This, he thought, would make her turn back and bring her again to the Brocken.

The North-wind did all that he could to fulfil the Devil's behest. He howled, and whistled, and blew; he shook the trees till they trembled to their very roots, and sent their broken branches on to the ground to the very feet of little Ilse. He threw a young fir-tree, which had not yet gained a firm footing in the steep rock, right across her path; it caught the flowing veil of little Ilse, and nearly drew her aside; but the little Princess tore herself loose, and did not care how much of her veil remained in the hands of the North-wind. She did not care for herself—she had no fear on her own account; she only thought of her dear trees, and she would so willingly have helped them to fight against the storm if she could only have done so. She went to the fallen fir-tree, threw herself over it, shed a stream of tears over it, and compassionately washed its wounds. The small twigs of beech and oak, which the North-wind threw into her lap, she caressed with her soft arms, kissed their torn leaves, and carried them along with her for some distance, until she could deposit them gently upon some mossy bank.

And the Devil still stood on the Brocken, and ground his teeth when he saw that all the endeavours of the North-wind were of no avail, and could do nothing against little Ilse. "I will send out the Winter, then," he grumbled, "and bind her in chains." Dreary, grey Winter, with hunger and cold, with long, dark nights, in which temptation is abroad, and sin pursues its secret paths, has brought me in already many a poor soul, and surely will be able to overpower the delicate Water Princess. I bid thee, North-wind, blow continually down there and stir not, shake the leaves from the trees, and prepare the way for Winter. You know that he never comes until he can tread with a heavy step through the bare branches."

And the North-wind, an obedient slave, blew again, wilder and sharper than ever, through the valley. The beeches stood trembling and shivering, and in terror allowed their yellow leaves to fall to the ground, the oaks grew quite red at their fingers' ends with cold, dropped the last leaves from their twigs, and, with naked branches, anxiously expected the arrival of Winter. The fir-tree alone was calm, and unchanged bore his dark-green regal mantle. Little Ilse, running at their feet, could not understand how all this was to end, and she reproved the trees, and exclaimed: "You silly, silly trees, why do you pelt me with all your dry leaves; do you no longer love little Ilse, and do you wish to scratch her eyes out with brown acorns and hard beech-nuts?" Quite angry, she ran away from them, and shook the dry leaves out of her tresses, and out of the shining folds of her robe.

Meantime Winter had arrived on the Brocken, and his Satanic Majesty with his own hands hung a mantle of the thickest fog upon his shoulders. He then quietly strode over the hills, and lowered gloomily over the valleys. At first he was not such an unpleasant guest, and endeavoured to gain good opinions; he decked out the trees and bushes in sparkling coats of hoar-frost, so that little Ilse, quite dazzled with so much splendour, did not know which way to look. Then came the flakes of snow dancing in the air, and the little Princess at first thought that it was the clouds themselves that wished to pay her a visit in the valley, and renew the acquaintance commenced upon the mountain. But when Winter laid his cold white covering thicker and thicker over the whole valley, burying everything beneath it—stones and roots, moss and herbs, and even the trembling blades of grass—then did little Ilse's heart beat loud with fear, and she thought that her turn must soon come. She already grieved much for her beloved green meadows, which she could no longer see; and when she assiduously laboured to wash off the snow from all the stones that she could reach, and to liberate the small mosses, she was horrified to feel sharp ice-points penetrating her delicate fingers, and she saw how the Winter tormented hard shining circles round the stones and the roots of the trees, which, with increasing sharp points, were to hold and encompass her, and, finally, completely enchain her delicate limbs. Grim Winter now laid his cold, heavy hand of ice upon the breast of the poor child; a cold shuddering seized upon little Ilse, and, trembling, she embraced the knotty roots of the Pine-tree, and looked up imploringly towards the Forest King.

She beheld him wrapped in the white covering of Winter; but from

his branches beneath the cold snow, a deep ever-green shone down upon her, and a mild breath of Spring fell warm and consoling upon her breast, and breathed new life and energy into her. "Oh, Pine-tree!" exclaimed little Ilse, "how do you manage to brave the winter, and to remain green and lively in his icy arms? Cannot I also learn how to do it?" "Because I am founded upon a rock," replied the Pine-tree; "and I lift up my head to heaven, and the Lord gives me the power to remain green for ever; and you, little Ilse, are sprung from the rock, and reflect in your pure waters the light of heaven unsullied as it pours down upon you; if true life is within you, that inward impulse, which the Lord gives, then strength will not fail you to overcome the winter. Place your trust in God, then, little Ilse, and exert yourself, and do not feel weary." "Dear Pine-tree," said little Ilse, "I will be strong and good, like you; and the Winter shall have no power over me." And, with a powerful exertion, she tore herself loose from the icy arms that held her; she struck at the rough hands which endeavoured to hold her garments tightly between the stones, and rushed impetuously down into the valley, breaking to pieces all the icy bonds that had impeded her movements. Old Winter could not keep pace with so lively a companion, and he seated himself, grumbling, in the snow, and was obliged to confess his impotency, and the impossibility of catching swift little Ilse.

On the following day, as the little Princess was dashing along in the exulting pride of triumph, driving before her the icicles which she had torn away from the stones, the Mosses on the banks called out to her: "O Ilse, dear Ilse, come and help us; the snow weighs so heavily upon our soft heads, we can no longer stand upright upon our slender stalks. Help us, little Ilse; Winter is so hard upon us!" And Princess Ilse condescendingly and compassionately approached them, carefully raised up a portion of the snowy canopy that covered them, put her sweet face beneath it, and whispered to the Mosses the wisdom she had learnt from the Pine-tree. "Because you are rooted on the rock, little Mosses, and the good God allows you to remain green under the snow, therefore, you must not forget that divine life is in you; and endeavour to be strong, and to raise yourselves up and grow under the soft winter covering. God will hearken to you, if you pray to him." And the Mosses bestirred themselves, and grew quite warm with their exertions; and, after a short time, they joyfully exclaimed: "Ilse, Ilse, it answers! we already stand upright and are really growing; the snow gives way wherever we grasp it with our green little hands."

Thus, little Ilse taught her playfellows, the mosses and grasses, how to use their strength and to brave the Winter. She gave the young grasses to drink of her pure living waters, and encouraged them to grow and stretch themselves, and to give the first greeting to Spring, when he at last again reappeared in the valley, cleared away the snow from the ground, and frightened back Winter to the Brocken; but even there the warm sun would not permit him to remain. The Pine tree had also thrown off his white over-coat and had placed bright green lights on the points of all his green branches in honor of Spring, and oaks and beeches resumed their green garments, and little Ilse lived happy, delightful days in the quiet, glorious forest, for many many hundred years.

Winter, it is true, returned every year, and acted the same cruel part towards the trees and plants, and laid his splendid traps in the hope of catching little Ilse. But the active, healthy child did not allow herself to be caught; as swift and as agile as a little lizard, she always managed to escape from his rough hands of ice. And every year the trees resumed their green, were never more beautiful nor fresher than in the spring, as if their hard struggle with the winter had given them new strength and vitality; and little Ilse was also more beautiful and glorious when the snow had melted in the mountains, and she dashed along in full pride, foaming through the forest. The snow is like sweet mother's-milk for little mountain rills, and the more heartily they drink of it, the better do they prosper.

The green forest was proud of its adopted child, and because she no longer thought of herself, but only of her dear friends, the trees and plants, and how she could please them, and because she herself had entirely forgotten that she was a Princess—for that very reason, all the others remembered it, trees and flowers, the stones, the slender mosses and grasses—and they esteemed her and showed her the highest respect, and did her homage in their own quiet sincere way.

And wherever Princess Ilse ran through the valley, flowers and herbs crowded round her feet, kissed the hem of her garment and her floating veil, and the tall slim reeds stood whispering on her path and doffed their plumes to greet her as she passed. The thoughtful bluebells, the most lovely of the flower children of the forest, they loved little Ilse better than anything else, and wished always to be near her; they came quite close to her, bent over her brow and contemplated her with their deep earnest eyes, like pious thoughts. They even ventured upon the wet polished stones which Princess Ilse held tightly in her arms, and she kissed them tenderly, and placed a soft carpet of moss beneath their feet that their delicate little limbs might have a firm footing upon the slippery ground. The bluebells lived in perfect harmony with the grasses and herbs, the happy life of fairies on some enchanted isle, spending their whole summer upon the wet stones which Princess Ilse held in her arms. The ferns also sought a footing on the damp stones, and fanned little Ilse, to cool her, with their splendid green fans, and coquetted with sunbeams, and prevented them kissing their dear little Ilse. But the sunbeams also loved the dear child, and came down, as often as the grey clouds on the mountains allowed them, into the forest, and played with her among the trees. From time immemorial, the grey clouds were appointed guardians of the sunbeams, and because they themselves were so thick and clumsy and could scarcely move along, unless the whirlwind now and then came upon them with his staff and made them "move on," therefore they did not relish the joyous glimmer and dazzle of their agile wards, and their sports with little Ilse on the greensward, and for days and days the clouds would sit upon the mountains like a wall, and would not allow the smallest bit of sunshine, however slim it made itself, to escape through them. Then they poured down rain into the valley, and chuckled with satisfaction at beholding little Ilse running along gloomily alone. The sunbeams were always much annoyed at such conduct, and created quite a confusion behind the backs of the old ladies in grey, quizzing and teasing them with pointed phrases to such an extent, that they grew quite warm, and were finally compelled to beat a silent retreat to escape from their sarcasms. As soon as the road was clear, the sunbeams rushed down into the forest, mirrored themselves in the sparkling drops still hanging on the trees, and romped often for a whole day with little Ilse on the grass. They were there one day when a white strawberry blossom, whose very numerous family is spread over all the valleys of the Hartz, had slyly crept up to admire her round little face, in the sparkling dress of the little Princess. But Ilse had seen her, and shook her finger at her, and exclaimed: "Oh for shame! little strawberry blossom, you are vain of the golden buttons on your brow, and wish to mirror and admire yourself." The startled blossom let her white leaves fall and darted back under the thick foliage. But a sunbeam ran after her, laughing, and discovered her under the broad leaves; and the poor blossom was quite ashamed at being found out. And whenever she met a sunbeam, she blushed deeper and deeper till she at last, the colour of purple, stood behind the green screen of leaves and quite abashed hung down her little head. Even at the present day she has not forgotten that her vanity was made so public, and still blushes and sinks her pretty little head whenever she sees a sunbeam.

Ilse's old friend, the good natured full Moon, also paid her a visit some times; he did not mind the difficult path over the mountains, and halted above the Ilsen-rock, the most beautiful point of the whole range, which the inhabitants of the valley had called after the little Princess; he would then look at her with a pleasant smile, and behold his darling rippling away in the shade of the mountains, playing an amusing game with the silver rays which he threw down to her.

The valley in which little Ilse dwelt, had now been inhabited for some time. At first little Ilse was very shy of men; and it needed all the eloquence and persuasion of the old Pine-tree before he could convince her that she ought to be on good terms with them, and become accustomed to their ways. The first people that came into the forest were a couple of coal-burners, who built themselves a hut, telled trees, and erected and lit their furnaces. Little Ilse shed many many tears over her dear trees as they fell beneath the blows of the sharp axe and lay dying on the ground; and the grasses and flowers wept and lamented as the men trod a path through the wood, trampling on their little heads till the tender heart of little Ilse bled for them. The small flames and the fumes which arose from the furnace reminded her of the fearful night she had passed on the Brocken, and caused her the most serious alarm. But the Pine-tree impressed upon her that man was the lord of

the creation, made by God after his own image, and that all other created things were ordained to serve him. That every tree had its fixed time of existence, determined by the Almighty, and that it would then fall by the hand of man or by the lightning of Heaven, by fire or by rot eating up its vitals. Nor should she be alarmed at fire, it was a holy power that did much good upon earth, when wisely applied; little Ilse would learn to understand all this, be brought into closer contact with fire, give him her hand, and work together with him.

Princess Ilse by no means looked forward with pleasure to the day that she was to be introduced to fire, but still she entertained great respect for the wisdom of the Pine-tree, and placed great confidence in what he said.

Again, after a long interval many people came into the valley with axes and spades; they brought oxen and goats along with them, which they drove out to graze upon the green slopes in the hills. Not far from the Ilsen-rock, where the valley widens, they advanced close to little Ilse, felled many trees, cut them up into beams and boards, and dug on the side a great hall for the little Princess, protected its sides with stones and turf, and towards the valley left a large doorway carefully closed up with boards. Of the beams they had meantime built houses and arranged dwellings for their wives and children; and when all was ready they came to Princess Ilse and begged her to come into the great hall and make herself comfortable there. Little Ilse thanked them, and ran away as she did from all things that appeared monstrous to her; but the men stopped her path with stones and earth and tore away a large piece of rock which had protected little Ilse. And as she was running very fast, she could not stop herself, but rushed headlong into the hall, which men call a tank, and spread herself over its whole surface and beat angrily with foaming waves against its sides. It took some time before she was calm in her strange prison, but at last she remained quiet, collected her waters and her thoughts, and looked up interrogatively towards the Pine-tree which stood unscathed close to the gable of the new house. The Pine-tree smiled sadly and said: "Culture is coming, little Ilse, and the liberty and quiet of our beautiful forest will be much curtailed." "Culture," sighed little Ilse, "God have mercy upon us, that must be an invention of the Evil One—who cuts down so many noble trees, tears off their bark, and hews them in pieces—he cannot have anything good in his mind." "Poor child," retorted the Pine-tree, smiling, "what will you say when you become acquainted with Industry, the grandchild of Culture; she is a treasure-seeker, and digs up the earth in search of gold, and does not spare the last trees when they come in her way. She roots up whole forests, and plants turnips, and builds large stone houses, with tall monotonous chimneys: wherever she comes, Poetry beats a retreat." Little Ilse folded her hands and looked so alarmed, that the Pine-tree added: "Fear not, child, it will take a long, long time, before Industry can reach us. She has no predilection for the mountains, and is more suited to the plains; and we will beseech the Lord to protect our quiet valley from her approach. But Culture is a faithful servant of the Lord, brings blessing and prosperity, and the word of God along with her wherever she enters in peace. Do you not hear the bell chime, evening and morning, in the valley? The Emperor has given the castle there at the entrance of the valley, to a worthy bishop, and he has brought pious monks there, and turned it into a monastery; and in their service have the people come and settled here."

Little Ilse understood all this, and had already gained more confidence towards man. She pressed against the outlet door and looked, dropping between the crevices of the boards, towards the house lower down. She beheld below her an immense newly-finished mill-wheel, and the miller's curly-headed boy stood upon the narrow path, and called out, laughing, "Yes, look away, my pretty Princess; the doors will soon be opened, and then the dance will commence, and you will whirl merrily round the wheel." "Am I to be broken upon the wheel, then?" thought little Ilse; and, with a beating heart, she contemplated the wheel below. The wheel creaked in all its joints and spokes, and whispered to her, "Do you not, then, recognise us, little Ilse? We are the wood of your dear trees; do you not know us? Fear nothing, we will not hurt you!" And when the miller came out, and prepared to pull up the sluice, and called out merrily, "Now, then, come along, little Ilse; you have rested long enough in the tank, come and bestir yourself, and help us to work," the little Princess no longer hesitated, but rushed straight to the wheel, took up her frock well together, and stepped with her delicate little feet, carefully and prudently, first upon one step, then upon the other; and when the wheel began to move under her light pressure, she hopped boldly on from step to step, let her veil flutter in the wind, put on her little cap of foam, and, finally, dashed merrily along the mill-dam, whilst the wheel revolved with power and speed, the mill beat time with its clapper; and strings of silver pearls, which Princess Ilse had lost out of her moistened locks, dropped down from all the spokes of the mill-wheel.

Little Ilse had now become a handmaiden in the service of man, a water of life and prosperity for the valley and its inhabitants. With the men she worked in the stamp-mills and iron-works; she made the acquaintance of the dreaded fire, and soon found out that the aversion was mutual, and that fire had as much dread of her as she had for it; and, therefore, they never approached each other, except when necessary for the completion of labour; soon separated again, each going its own way; and they respected each other at a distance. To the women and girls, Princess Ilse was carried up in clean buckets into their dwellings; she helped them in their domestic labours in the kitchen, the wash-house, and the scouring-tub. She washed and bathed the children, watered the flowers in the gardens and the vegetables, and had no reason to be ashamed of any menial office; for Princess Ilse lost nothing of her inborn dignity of Princess by performing the humble offices of love among the children of men.

Many centuries had again passed over since little Ilse had, for the first time, put her foot upon a mill-wheel. When the doctrines of Luther reached the valley, the monks abandoned the old abbey at the foot of the mountain pass, and a noble race took possession of it. For many, many years, the Counts Stolberg dwelt at the Castle Ilsenburg, and governed the surrounding country, and little Ilse served them and their vassals, as she had served the monks and their dependants. But when the castle fell into decay, and the Counts of Stolberg selected another stronger castle for their dwelling-place, they took care that Princess Ilse and her beloved valley should not suffer by the change. They induced greater numbers of industrious men to settle in the neighbourhood, and to work in her company. She helped them to dig out the noble marrow of the mountains—the powerful iron—and to give it proper shape and form for the uses of industry.

From dawn to dusk, little Ilse might be seen busy at work, without ever showing discontent or weariness at her hard labours; and whoever met her in the valley, as she stepped forth from the forest in her bright purity, at once recognised a Princess of the purest water, and paid homage to her in his innermost heart. And yet little Ilse was no saint for all that; and when the Almighty caused a thunder-storm to burst over her head, which stirred up her waters from the very ground, and brought to light all her sins and peccadilloes, from which no dweller on earth is free—not even the noblest-born—little Ilse was always sad at beholding how dull and dirty were her waves. But she took the storm—as every one should regard the storms of life—as a warning for self-examination and purification. And when all that was impure had left her, then she joyously sped on her path, more beautiful and powerful than ever, shining in renewed strength and beauty.

It was a deep source of grief to little Ilse when, in consequence of the increasing culture, a high road gradually crept up the valley, on numerous wheel-barrows, with spades and stone-brewers, which cut up the green forest sward, felled to the ground an immense number of noble trees, and with sharp weapons fought its way onward, which it could alone accomplish by dint of arms. "I cannot stand this! I cannot allow this," exclaimed little Ilse, in the greatest indignation, "such a tedious personage with the French name," year after year, crawl along at its snail's pace alongside of me? perhaps play the part of governor towards me, and order me about and say: "Not so fast, Ilse! don't come so near the flowers—do not jump so, Ilse!—look how quickly I go along." The honest foot-path there in the wood is a different sort of a fellow altogether, and nods in a friendly manner through the green shade of the oaks as he turns the corner round the rock." And in a great rage the little Princess foamed and rushed against the pieces of rock which supported the chaussée, trying to shake them, and to

* In Germany the high roads are all called *chaussees*.



GOING TO THE PANTOMIME.—DRAWN BY J. LEECH.—(SEE PAGE 558.)

bring the hated French stranger to the ground. "Ilse, Ilse!" said the Pine-tree, in a warning voice from the forest, "what silly tricks are you playing now? Have you not yet learnt to understand that we must suffer everything which tends to the service and benefit of man? If we trees can put up with the presence of the chaussée, surely you may do so much more readily. We certainly are not pleased at seeing it walking up the valley in its dusty garments. For shame, Ilse; look how the witches are laughing at you from the mountain-ridge."

The Devil's brood on the Brocken had been dispersed ever since pious Christians had taken up their abode there; and the little witches and sprites wandered now about the country in all sorts of enticing shapes and disguises, to entrap poor souls and gain them for their dark realm.

A body of young witches, who still owed little Ilse a grudge for having thrown them into the shade by her dignified manners and beauty, on the Brocken, came regularly down into the valley every summer to watch her movements, and to endeavour, at least, to sow discord between her and her friends, if they could not do any other harm to her. Disguised in the brilliant scarlet dress of the foxglove, these little witches stood in coquettish groups upon the unwooded slopes of the mountain in the broad sunshine, and nodded to the ferns, and, endeavouring to separate them, they called out to the bluebells that the foxglove and bluebell were very near relations. The little bluebells, however, saw the deadly drop of poison in the brilliant flower-cup, and quietly shook their heads and went down to little Ilse, and asked

the ferns to stand before them and spread out their fans, that they might shut out the wicked crew from their sight. Princess Ilse cast up a shy glance, and muttered quiet prayers as she passed on. She patted and praised her faithful bluebells and ferns; and when she found that the wet stones on her path looked up with too bright a face towards the bewitching flowers, she threw suddenly her silvery veil over them, and dazzled them with bright rays of light, which she caught up and threw good-humouredly into their faces.

As regards the chaussée, however, Princess Ilse, although she could not prevent its presence in the valley, would have as little to do with it as possible. By side paths, through the deepest shades of the forest, she endeavoured, by meandering about, to lose sight of it altogether;



THE GOOSE CLUB.—DRAWN BY PHIZ.—(SEE PAGE 582.)



THE BOROUGH MARKET ON CHRISTMAS-EVE.—DRAWN BY G. DODGSON.—(SEE NEXT PAGE.)

and, when dancing along in joyous haste over the rocks, thinking that she had entirely got rid of her dusty companion, she suddenly came right upon it again; and the chaussée threw a little bridge over her, and Princess Ilse was obliged to glide bent under the yoke, and swallow her displeasure until she again appeared at the other side free and uncontrolled.

But the anger of little Ilse was never of long duration. Lower down in the valley she runs quietly alongside the chaussée, and humbly kisses the foot of the Ilse-rock, on the summit of which a sacred cross is erected; for, as Princess Ilse has not died, she lives at this very day, and goes daily to the mills and iron-works in the valley to assist in

their labours. On Sunday, when the mills are closed, and the industrious inhabitants of the valley of the Ilse wend their way, in their holiday attire, up the Castle-hill, to the venerable little church above, to pray and hear the word of God, which is preached there so pure and simply, with so much power and intensity, then is the silver voice of little Ilse distinctly heard bubbling its music with the chimes of the bells and solemn sounds of the organ, as they resound from out the old castle walls over the valley.

For many centuries a blessing to the valley through which she runs, little Ilse has, even now, lost nothing of her original freshness and beauty. For she had drunk of the cup of eternal youth which is pre-

pared or all those who thirst for it, and known where to seek for it, an which is to be found in industrious, useful occupation, which springs up in purity and clearness, which puts aside every impure spot, and is transparent with the light of Heaven, and is placed by God upon a rock. Princess Ilse is an example to the world what may be made out of a silly wayward child, when the demon of Pride is taken out of it; and the sons of men who, yearning for sunshine, come from the barren tracts or bare hill-tops of this everyday life into the valley of the Ilse, they find that she breathes into them the simple pure feelings of childhood, makes them again become happy confiding children, as long as they remain under the shade of her luxuriant forest where the



THE WAITS; OR, MAKING THE MOST OF IT.—DRAWN BY H. G. HINE.—(SEE PAGE 551.)

green is greener and the air fresher and more replete with vitality than any other spot on earth.

Little Ilse has long since given up fearing the Devil and his witches as she glides under the shade of the Ilse-rock. She even dares, at times, to play the part of Princess Cooking-water; and, when the summer visitors to the valley wish to make coffee on the mossy bank under the Ilse-rock, she enters their kitchens without hesitation, takes no praise to herself for the excellence of the coffee, and demands, as sole recompense, that those who have had the enjoyment of drinking coffee made of the Ilse stream shall leave crumbs of cake behind for her friend the Field-mouse. This Field-mouse dwells in the crevices of the stones of the mossy bank, and descends in a direct line from the identical Field-mouse which built the gallery along the side of the Brocken, through which, many hundred years ago, Princess Ilse made her escape. It is true, that not every company has the honour of beholding the sharp little head and bright eyes of the graceful little animal emerging from its cushions of moss; for the mouse is very particular in its acquaintances, and timid, like all his race. But whoever does get a glimpse of him, is bound, "at peril of Ilse's displeasure," to feed him with cake, or with whatever sweets men and mice love to nibble at among the crevices of rocks.

Such a treaty was duly agreed upon, on a beautiful day in August, in the year of our Lord, 1851, and sealed under the Ilse-rock, and in the remembrances of the Hartz, of the coffee-drinkers assembled, that day who fed the mouse.

The tale has now nothing more to relate: it has built its nest in the green rocky valley, and feels no desire to follow little Ilse farther into the flat country where she joins the Ocker and the Ecker, and lower down the Aller, which finally leads her, after all, to the old Weser. Old Weser drags Ocker and Ecker, and Aller and Ilse, and all their rills and tributaries, out into the open sea.

And my little tale cannot tell what the feelings of poor little Ilse may be when she comes to herself, out far in the wide wide Ocean.

GOING TO THE PANTOMIME.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY LEECH.

MR. JONATHAN JONES, like Mr. John Gilpin, is a

Citizen of credit and renown.

His name is great in the wholesale grocery trade; and I wish you or I had his cheque for a cool thousand. His temper is sweet, as you may guess by his trade, and see from Mr. Leech's capital and correct drawing of him. The two young gentlemen in the box, Jonathan and Jack, are as sharp shavers as need be—only you call them "young figs," and you will find claret cheap. They are half the day in their father's counting-house, and the other half learning French and German; for the old foggy laughs at the "classicks," and says, "My boys shall learn the living tongues, and when one goes to Paris and the other to Vienna, to open agencies, they'll be as up in the lingo as the natives themselves."

Place pour les dames, and particularly a good deal of place for Mrs. Jonathan Jones. You see her struggle to get into the cab. It reminds one—taking the door as a ravine—of Napoleon crossing the Alps. Behind, on the paternal arm, hangs Miss Bessy, who is all smiles and dimples, and sings like Miss Poole. On the other side, Miss Julia takes her father's arm: she sings unlike Grisi, but does not think so. The juvenile beside his mother is Master Bob, and appears to be imitating Mr. Weal, the new Clown. The small boy with the big hat, and the peculiar binocle—certainly not marked by the name of Voightlander, the King of the Opera-glasses—is Master Harry, mild and meek—the lamb to his brother's lions; while the gay deceiver, who, with his hand on his heart, and his toes turned in—the original manner, by the way, in which mankind walked—and who is pouring love-sweets into the little ears of gentle Fanny—is a smatcher from a neighbouring house, one Tommy. The two smiling nurses—one with the baby—"a most beautiful child, and the image both of his father and mother"—look as pleased as though they were going themselves; while the poor solitary doctor's boy, with an innate disgust of his unsavory cargo, has bright visions of the Clown, and is thinking of throwing his basket over an area and sticking on to the cab behind; but, alas, his treasury is bankrupt—the last threepenny bit went for a bun and ginger-beer. Jeames may be observed standing grimly at the door. And the upper portion of a cabman's body, with his whip, has been introduced, indicating with singular clearness the liberality of Mr. Jones in taking two cabs. The children follow in the second chariot, with the guardian Jeames, "who has been in the family well nigh seventeen years."

Thus, then, having packed and disposed of our family party—who depart with loud acclamations—we are sorry that we cannot (having no longer the brilliant pencil of Mr. Leech to illumine our path) narrate what took place before, during, and after the Pantomime.

THE GOOSE CLUBS OF LONDON.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY PHIZ.

THE silence which the lower animals strictly observe respecting their own sentiments renders it impossible to ascertain, from good authority, what they really think of the manner in which we treat them. If they could speak, it would settle the question; as they cannot, we are reduced to guesses. There is, for example, no dispute that while, in this country, and all over the Christian world, Christmas excites religious recollections, on which it is not our province to enlarge, nor our business to insist; it also evokes the highest gastronomical activity in both upper and lower classes. It is decidedly a feast, as well as a solemnity; and the feast is kept, and has been kept generally, with the most undying culinary fervour. When we say undying, we refer rather to the zeal than to those who show it. Well is it known at this season—especially among the out-patients of the hospitals of London—that can be effected by concentrating extraordinary vigour upon an ordinary action (not, alas! ordinary to all), the despatch, without the deglutition, of a dinner. Many of the votaries of the blessed season lay down their lives regularly every year, in the rites which they then celebrate, giving the last supreme proof of single-mindedness and enthusiasm, by undergoing a repelition which is always inconvenient, and very often irreparable.

But to return to our geese. It is of that subject much rather than of the finer considerations of Christmas time that a great many people are thinking. The Goose-clubs have been as active as bee-hives for many weeks past. Sixpence every Saturday evening, after wages received, for ten or twelve Saturdays, or even more; it seems but little for a fine goose, or, it may be turkey, and a bottle of spirits, to carry home on Christmas-eve, for next day's jovial dinner. But there are all varieties. Some of the Goose-clubs which abound in the poorest and most densely peopled districts of London require a slight extra payment, while there will be more than one, and perhaps more than two, bottles to pack into the basket, and to garnish the escutents, in the end. Some of the clubs again soar above "the low line;" there, your instalments must be heavier, or, "all things being agreeable and easy-like," you may please yourself, and make the payments "of an equal amount," provided you begin them earlier, and sustain them longer. "The object is to do

everything comfortable, and to come it easy to subscribers." But, here, we say, the total amount subscribed must be more considerable, because the value proffered is itself far more interesting. There will be distinction in the prizes, and these will be determined by the dice or by a lottery, "all fair, and proper, and above board;" and Number One to have his first pick of the lot. His prize will include, in addition to the finest bird, a bottle of wine, and bottles of the ardent liquors most in request, of each liquor one bottle—and it is "expected" that he will treat the company present. The second prize imposes a corresponding obligation on its drawer. In some places, we believe, that the drawer of the third prize is amerced in the like honourable indebtedness, in the ratio of his luck. There is variety, we say, in the amount and methods of subscription, and in the nature and value of the goods delivered ultimately in return. But, in all these clubs, whether they be poor or costly, aspiring or modest, whether they content themselves with "the low line," or "come out strong, and do the thing somewhat spicy;" whether they be "neat and appropriate,"—as is said of speeches that are no better than they should be, or brilliant and pretentious, as is said of other speeches which are generally a great deal worse—in all these arrangements, we repeat, whether the principle of the club (which is, for the most part, the metropolitan principle), or that of the raffle (which is adopted in many rural places) be the basis of the plan, in all alike a provision is carefully made to ensure, on the part of contributing customers, a periodical extra potation, a supererogatory, yet unavoidable, amount of downright drinking. Boniface knows perfectly well what he is doing. He gets more for his goose than its nominal price. It appears a cheap goose at the money; but not seldom it proves the dearest which the poor man ever bought, the dearest on which his poor family were ever regaled. It is "expected"—and imagine not that conventional obligations exercise their moral but irresistible despotism only in high society—it is "expected" of "gentlemen" when they come on Saturday to pay their instalments, that they should drink a drop of whatever they like best before departing. The expectation is not disappointed. Some comply with the rule, to comply with it; others comply with it, because they would have drunk even more than it requires, if it never existed, and they merely add that quantity to their predetermined allowance. It is the drunkard's joy, and the tippler's excuse; it is the boon-companion's snare, and, worse than all, it is frequently the sober and honest man's cup of enlistment, his recruiting fee among that lost and doomed battalion who reel through life in misty degradation, to end it in horror. Here, first, the taste—one day destined to prove so irresistible and so uncontrollable—is engendered in blood which knew nothing of it before. It is but little that the drunkard should be confirmed; he is beyond injury; but drunkards can be trained; drunkards can be made of smaller occasion. Others are beginning where the old toper is ending; others are starting where he is arriving; others learn what he can never more unlearn; to others the nightmare, which he shall not shake off till he shakes of his carcass, is now but a strange sort of easy dream; down, far down the steep and slippery declivity, which he shall not re-ascend, he shall have companions or followers flung fast on the track; he could tell them that the first few steps include all the difficulty—he remembers something of it; easy enough, and swift enough, the subsequent rush, gathering new momentum, and overwhelming impulsion at every inch of progress; he knows it, and yet, growing idiotic, hardly knows it; knows it is, knows not how; and there they are, they come his road, they are bound for his own bourne. Yes, it is a dear goose, even in money. That cheery species of terminable annuity which the publican procures, did it even cease on Christmas-eve, would be very large and very profitable for what he gives in exchange; but it ceases not always then; it is sometimes a life annuity, closed only by a death of despair, and by the ruin of a family. Eight shillings are not even the whole money price; there is the cost of the weekly tipplings, and possibly the cost of tipplings that become nightly, and then become matutinal as well as nightly; and suppose even that fraud or crime supplies not at last the funds of this new expenditure—this new *et sacra* necessity; suppose even that work be not impeded, nor earnings forfeited, nor want (the want of a whole household) incurred; yet, in addition to the eight shillings and the "treats," perdition is sometimes to be estimated in the outlay for this peculiarly-purchased Christmas dinner.

On Christmas-eve (not until after wages have been all duly paid in every establishment), the various subscribers assemble in the great lottery-room of the public-house which they respectively frequent. Those who may have for a time intromitted their hebdomadal instalments at the bar of the tavern, have liquidated the arrears on some subsequent Saturday. All is in trim, and it only remains to distribute the prizes. Under a wall, which, like every wall, indeed, is tapestried with the evergreen hangings of the holly, are ranged the several assortments of bird and bottle; and generally these are ticketed. The corresponding or duplicate tickets are deposited in a hat, from which each subscriber draws one forth. He gets the portion indicated by his lot. This implies that the landlord has himself divided and classified the prizes; and it is better so; for, otherwise a person might obtain the best throw at dice, and then perhaps find himself not sufficiently skilful, or rather sufficiently experienced, to choose the best bird. If he made a bad selection, he would still be obliged to defray the "treat" incidental to the first prize.

In the country the arrangements most in usage are, as we have hinted, on a different plan. The subscriptions are lower; but there are not prizes for all the subscribers. It is in fact a genuine lottery, leaving to the host a clear profit, and a profit more independent of the allurements of concomitant drink. There is hardly a village in many of the southern counties, where, for weeks before Christmas, the traveller may not see on the windows of the inns or taverns large placards inscribed with the words "TO BE RAFFLED FOR, ON CHRISTMAS-EVE;" and a description of the edible and potable articles consigned to fortune is subjoined in the most impressive language within reach of mine host's eloquence. The qualification fee for partaking in the raffle need not be paid, in general, until the day itself of distribution—a distribution which will, probably, apportion quite as many blanks as premiums. At the appointed time, flock into the parlour or tap-room the aspirants—grooms, servant-maids, ostlers, gardeners, broken-down tradesmen—a motley troop, like so many pilgrims to a holy shrine. Those who gain nothing are generally included among the recipients of the various "treats" which the more fortunate bestow; and so, for consolation's sake, many are stupefied, at least, who are not enriched. The lucky and obliging persons who stupidly others, are called the "standers;" not because they are peculiarly good at standing, in the true sense of that word, and certainly not because they know how to make others stand. On the contrary, the most direct and the most ordinary effect of their efforts appears to be to render standing a very difficult, uncertain, arduous, and even in many instances a desperate sort of achievement; a position, as it were, in the very face of the enemy, to be maintained at all hazards, though tasking the utmost powers of the defenders. One would say, to behold these resolute and gallant men, still struggling with cheerful perseverance for their feet, notwithstanding that the ground seems to slip, and heave, and glide beneath them—one would say, but for the barred windows and the solid walls, and the serenely burning gas-lights, that a strong wind, amounting at times to a hurricane, blew through that sheltered and comfortable chamber. But still they hold on, with a courage more unshaken than themselves; and it is only after they have continued "to stand something all round," for a considerable time, that they give up standing altogether. Then, in due time, their families behold the prizes carried home—and often the now calm and peaceful prize-bearers themselves, whom over-exertion has reduced to a silent, numb, and even unconscious condition of mind. It has been known that the latter individuals have occasionally been the only objects borne across the domestic threshold. It has been also known that the bird and its appendages have arrived before their struggling master. It has been known, again, that the latter should sleep in a police-cell that night—though this arrangement had not entered into his preconcerted plan; that he should sleep there, unconscious of the brazen music and the many toned far-floating notes of proclamation which the bells of a thousand steeples were swinging through the frosty air of Christmas morning. It has been known that he had next day but little appetite for the dinner for which, during two preceding months, he had made provident exertions. In his little circle "some kind hearts have whispered, 'I wish he were here, enjoying the goose!'" "Enjoying the goose, indeed!" says the poor mother of the family, who has a blackened eye, and looks less bright than would befit the season;

"enjoying the goose, indeed! He'll enjoy that, for certain, whenever he goes enjoying himself."

Well! it might be worse. There was a time, within the memory of persons still in the hale and middle years of life, when the wife—who had long since "made her market," and whose eldest boy (if she herself did not choose to perform the errand) had fetched home from the scene of anything which might then have existed analogous to a modern goose-club, the proceeds of her husband's luck—there was a time when, sitting by the fire, she could have surely guessed where the absent owner of the vacant chair of honour was passing the vigil hours of the Christmas-eve. During the twelve days of the mirthful epoch cards were allowed by law in the public-houses, and at no other period of the year. Full advantage was taken of the license.

But there are other scenes, at home, even where a club-goose is to adorn the next day's table. The landlord, indeed, who long before had contracted in the country markets for the delivery of the necessary number, secures a rich profit out of the bargain; and it is significant of that truth that the raffles and lotteries in question should not be held at the poultryers, where the staple particular of the trade would warrant and suggest it. There are however, as we have said, other scenes at home. The purchases have been made; the circle has been collected, so far as death and absence permit, and includes some visitor, some isolated friend, whose own chair is empty in a distant place; the evergreens make a bowser of the room; the blazing fires pant and roar up the chimney; the stormy time has its own way out of doors—*quam juvat*; the year, for good or for evil, has closed its accounts with hearts that, for a while, refuse to be uneasy any longer; the journeyman cares not a rush for his master, who hopes not now for an hour more of his services; trouble and care are voted digressions from the question before the room; the evening cup and the still later glass go round; and, with jest, and song, and story, the time must be honoured, and Christmas kept. Christmas kept! It will not be kept beyond its own appointed moment by those who have the most skilful appliances of friendly and hilarious detention; nor can those keep it who first have it not in that sense at all, the friendless and the houseless; for even Christmas finds such as it passes, and leaves such as it passes away. And the shudders of their anguish in the wintry night air send along the electric chain "wherewith we are darkly bound" a softer and a painless shudder round many a warm hearth, where happier people listen for a moment to the muttering and unknown language of the angry wind; and they say that "somebody has passed over their graves," and think no more about the message of that mysterious telegraph. And they continue the convivial mirth till suddenly the bells break into jubilee; and the anniversary of that is come which, to borrow the words of Edmund Burke, "was of old proclaimed in a holy temple by a venerable sage, and not long before not worse announced by the voice of angels to quiet the innocence of shepherds."

The party separate in the hope that all will meet again next day to perform their respective parts in the "Popular Game of Goose."

MILES GERALD KEON.

A LONDON MARKET ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY G. DODGSON.

Will the reader be pleased to take a walk with us through the uproarious profusion and intricate variety of a great London market on the greatest of market-days? We will promise that his pocket shall not suffer, nor his sides be elbowed, nor his heels kicked, nor his hat knocked off, nor his dress torn, nor the gloss of it—if it has any—rubbed away. There are some who would submit to even those inconveniences for the sake of the spectacle which our companion shall behold, in immunity from them all—safe, unmolested, unfatigued. Or, if a lady will trust herself to our guidance, she shall not so much as need her veil. If it rains, it shall not wet her; if it snows, as is very likely, she shall walk through it, and no flake descend upon her head—over it, and no trace of her foot remain. She shall hear all, without being heard by any; see all, and be invisible; pass through the rude disorder of the densest crowd, and perchance amid blows, and not feel one single touch; nay, she shall put questions, and get answers from whomsoever she chooses to address; and out of them all, not one shall know to whom he speaks, or so much as that he does speak. On these terms let all come with us, who are inquisitive and timid; or inquisitive and lazy; or inquisitive and ill; or inquisitive, yet, from some detaining cause, unable to follow a more corporeal guide; or, in fine, who may be desirous of recalling the scene and the subject in which they themselves, perhaps, have made a part already.

First of all, notice the setting of the picture which we have to present to you. However wild and mixed and homely (like the proceedings of the time) still, like them, it stands under a beautiful and venerable shadow, which closes the prospect, and casts, from the distance, a lofty influence over the tumultuous merrymaking and miscellaneous bustle of the scene below. That tall structure which every now and then wins the eye upward from the glare, and offers so pleasing an outline against the wintry heaven, is nothing less than the famous and ancient Priory-Church of St. Mary Overy. The quaint name bespeaks the remote date; and what Christmas, with its idea and sound, is to mince-pie, plum-pudding, and punch bowl, nearly that is this revered old edifice to the joyous and noisy plenty displayed and assorted beneath its shadow. For we are in the Borough Market; and St. Mary Overy's is its Christmas in stone.

This great conclusive "pendent" is not the only particular to which we wished to refer when we spoke of the setting of our picture. It is a picture moulded in jewels peculiarly its own—the wild diamond of the gas-jets, flaring free of all impediment—the emerald and the garnet of the sprays of heart-cheering evergreen, and of bright red berry. Indeed, the first impression made by this almost unrivalled household market—after its stupendous fulness—is its lighting. In our days, we have in this respect a perfection of which previous times saw no specimen. That one butcher's shop, with its spouts of glare, soaring free, like winged steeds of fire, and subjected to no glass harness, would alone illuminate the entire space. It is not all honest trade; but honest trade wishes it were—would like its radiance to be predominant and despotic—and does its best to exterminate the works that love darkness, especially pocket-picking; for there is scarce a pocket present worth picking which is not the voluntary intending tributary of half-a-dozen shops. You can hardly see, such is the glare; you can hardly force your way, such is the crowd; and, we must add, you can hardly hear, such is the hubbub. It is not merely the noise of bargainings, in which screaming does as much as reason can do towards abating exorbitant terms; nor the noise of those who announce what it is they have to sell at the full pitch of their voices, and then hoarsely enforce the excellence of such wares respectively (we should fill a column in merely enumerating the rival cries which rage through the distracted air); it is not merely these sounds—nor the curses of altercation—nor "the discord of wheels that madding bray;" but there is—music. Certainly, it is robust, and requires to be robust. That band or orchestra opposite the plate-glass windows of the grocer is doing its very utmost. But there is an organ-grinder within half pistol-shot, who has faith in the principles on which his instrument has been constructed: constructed, we allow, in disregard of harmony, but with profound attention to sound, and to the far-stretching and keen-wounding force of it. His, we need hardly remark, is not one of those pleasing and delicately-made machines called (peripatetic) cabinet-pianos. No: it is the emitter of a brazen-roaring, not-to-be-suppressed, all-pervading, long-persisting, and exceedingly long-winded, style of melody, which takes no denial, and fears no rival. If we might use so bold a simile, without being considered American, it resembles nasal thunder. Yet, fearing, as we have said, no rival, this scientific and sallow stranger meets a superior. The superior is a vocalist—a tar with one leg; a man whose voice has made itself heard, ere now, although the artillery of two ninety-guns was talking at the same time.

But, "to bear is to conquer our fate;" let us disregard these distractions, and forcibly avert our much assaulted senses. There are things to be observed. What a number of large white baskets! The market is getting late, and yet it is getting fuller. Why is this? Those to whom cheapness is an object, and to whom, besides (it were not an object to them), the overcoming and beating-down of the shopkeeper's first demands, is an exhilaration, a joy, and a triumph—these characters, we say, come forth at the reduced hour of the market, like the reserves whom Tamerlane exhibited when, by the sacrifice of a more careless class of troops, he had fatigued the obstinacy

of his opponents. Prices are universally lowered now. The stock must be got off; and the fresh customers that pour into the scene know that fact well; we mean the fact that there is a feeling in the shop-keeping breast, in favour of clearing away the entire disposable assortment, which, in his fond hopes, the owner of that breast—or, in other words, the seller—may have accumulated.

Now, the first class of purchasers have retired; they were servants—housekeepers, frequently, with assistants, and coming, in some instances, and for certain articles on which certain savings were to be effected—from a great distance. The second class have also retired; they were also of the fair sex, carrying very small baskets, and sometimes followed by servants carrying very large baskets, but occasionally relying on a different method, and requiring a good many of the purchased articles to be sent to addresses, taken down for that purpose, by the vendor. The third class have now come upon the scene; very different people, but in search, more or less, of the self-same description of good things. This class neither are servants, like the first; nor are attended by servants, like the second; nor can they presume to offer the mere addresses where they live as an equivalent for portage, like part of the latter; but neither being servants, nor having servants, they get all things cheaper, come at a cheaper time, and offer in their whole guise and aspect, an infinitely more suggestive history, and a more fertile presentment of the domestic hearth. Ah! how various! Yonder is a resolute dame, evidently the mother of several children, though none are about her; obviously she has a servant, and the servant is minding the little ones at home. She will be her own carrier. Where is her husband? That is the point. She, not quite indeed victorious, yet not any way subdued, cares—but sighs not. Observe that frenzy of illumination, that palatial, yet thoroughly vulgar blaze, those inordinate, overweening, flaunting, gas-bespangled, public windows; he is inside, slipping, sliding, gliding, tottering on the brink of fifty abrupt collisions and ignoble “rows,” but much restrained, and ultimately saved by the salutary remembrance of the severe guardian of his fireside; from going not restrained, yet restrained (much to his advantage), when away.

Yonder, again, is happiness; much happiness. Where? You see that clean, white fustian jacket, and (odd as it may sound) those polished boots? Its owner is a thoroughly respectable man. His wife, often torn away and separated for a moment by the crowd, clings and grapples to his stout careless elbow. On his other arm hangs the capacious basket. Suspense-exempted woman and lucky man! They have a full purse at this close of the year; and to-night, when they hold their little retrospective review, conversing with grave cheerfulness about the past, their hearts shall expand tranquilly as they plainly ascertain and congratulate each other on the result.

Why do all that little family, you ask, hold fast to mother's gown? Because mother has no one at home in whose care to leave them. But why not, at least, in their father's? And where is their father? Better not ask; that woman's forehead is cut, and she, otherwise being pretty, is frightfully disfigured by that wound and by the blackened eye, which tells such a tale of low, hideous, and brutal conduct, not practised, but endured. But even this episode, as it walks through the drama, succumbs to the spirit of the time and to the genius of the scene, and prevails not against the overruling influence of mirth and of cheerful activity pervading the general mass and preponderance of what you behold. Yonder is a brawl, vomited out of the door of a public-house; and seething, hissing, and murmuring to a considerable distance—disturbing, yet not interrupting—abating, yet not suppressing, the noise of complacent traffic and the bustling contentment of universal preparation. Not, perhaps, universal. To that hook-nosed gentleman, with his hands in his trousers-pockets, the time is no festival, and the market no particular occasion of profit. He is a Jew, and cares not for Christmas, one way or the other. There go some, who have either done all that the rest are doing, or have no such task to claim their attention. They are strolling, like ourselves, through the multiform changes, and enjoy their own thoughts. Thomas de Quincey tells us that, in his opium-eating days, the pleasure which beyond all that the formidable and dreadful habit procured him was the most valuable, the most inebriating, was the quick sympathy and divining fancy with which, in such lounges, he penetrated into all the intents, operations, and history of the successive and torrent-like groups of a crowded market evening. We, with the aid, not of Asmodeus, have seen now the hints and imagined the illing up of the outlines of many a various social story. And now, “the twelve days” of Christmas are about to begin; one day of repairing mirth for each of the twelve weary months of the bygone year. The clock of St. Mary Overy's old Priory Church has sounded the hours, as if there had been no hours between; so quickly has the hurricane of the market time seemed to speed away. And one by one have gone out the great lights of the scene. The three greatest last the longest; those of the grocers' shops, of the butchers', and (most brilliant of all), of the gin-palaces. All are now extinguished, as midnight sounds: the place becomes quickly vacant of its crowds; and most people have gone home, where they hear the sounds of the storm without, drowned by the visit of the “waits” as they sprinkle every where a passing share of immemorial music in their ambulatory minstrelsy.

It is just 100 years—it is the centenary anniversary—since in the country places of England, the memorable popular demonstrations took place, in opposition to the introduction of the new style. One great prejudice against it was, that from Rome had come the new and rectified astronomical calculation; it was some “popish novelty.” And yet when the people, by thousands, turned out, in their indignation, armed with lamp and torch, and candle, to consult the midnight almanack of the Glastonbury thorn, and of its shoots, in different rural places—and to see by the traditional blossoming of the venerable plant, whether this was really Christmas, and whether the 25th of December, or the 6th January should prove in truth “the better man of the two,” a feeling was manifested, for which a rooted prepossession would have been far more correctly the name.

M. G. K.

A NIGHT WITH THE WAITS; OR, MAKING THE MOST OF IT.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY W. G. HINE.

WAITS ORCHESTRA.

First Violoncello	Mr. Scrape.
First Cornet-à-piston ..	Mr. Blowhard.
First Trombone	Mr. Clang.
First Ophecleide	Mr. Grunt.
Bass Drum	Mr. Bang.
Triangle	Mr. Tinkle.

(N.B.—The rest of the orchestra sent medical certificates, stating that their constitutions were too delicate to come out at night.)

“HERE'S a go,” said the Ophecleide.
“Such a disappointment!” said the Triangle.
“It's enough to break my 'art,” said the Drum.
“I'll take to my bed,” said the Trombone.
“You're all fools,” said the Violoncello, who was respected as the most acute chap in the St. Giles Harmonic Society; “don't you see that the fewer we are the more we get.”

This intimation was received with a universal cheer, as having thrown a completely new light upon the subject.

“Look you,” continued Mr. Scrape; “not only as regards the number to share; but, the smaller the number, the less the noise; which will please the musical amateurs, who will say, ‘I never hear a band play more beautifully pianissimo’—(if you don't know what that means—it's soft); and so be'll naturally give us the more. And for the chaps as cut up rough, and have sick wives, there's quite enough on us to make a huliballoo which will be dreadful to the afflicted person, and bring down a shilling at least.”

The Cornet-à-piston gave a shriek, the Trombone a clang, the Ophecleide a grunt, the Bass-drum a bang, and the Triangle a tinkle, in token of the wisdom of the Violoncello; and the whole party sallied out.

“Where shall we try first?”
“The Dials?” said the sage.
“Why?” said the Ophecleide, in a gruff voice.
“Because there we can just play at the seven corners, and then play down all the streets; and either disturb or delight the whole neighbourhood: it's all one.”

It blew and it *snow* according to Mr. Tinkle, who said,
“It's very hard, as I have chilblains and no gloves nor mittens”—a statement which was echoed by the whole orchestra; but it was no use complaining, and so, selecting a corner-house—a “public”—where there were sure to be plenty of lodgers, they started at once in full swing in a sort of imitation of the “Row Polka.” Up went the first-floor window—“Police! Remove those men.” The “Police,” however, had just pocketed a shilling subscribed by the band, and he answered—“Can't hear what you say, sir;” and this convenient reply he maintained during the whole performance.

The First-floor had a bad headache, and was sitting over a weak glass of brandy-and-water, with a wet towel round his forehead. He shouted “Police!” until his head grew worse; when, with an exclamation of an improper character, he flung down a bad shilling, and shut the window with such a crash that two of the panes went in pieces into the street. Second-floor was a Grub-streeter, who wrote verses and fictitious murders—the former for twopence a stanza, and the latter for a penny: his publisher, a d, in fact, his proprietor, being one of the Catnachs, the celebrated encouragers of our ballad literature. This gentleman relieved his poetic mind by shouting out—

Go away. Do not stay.
Horrible you do play.

And vanished to return to his duties. Third-floor was drunk upon that floor. He had a black eye and a cut across a swollen nose. By his side sat a young wife, weeping; her baby asleep in her arms. From that window came neither reward nor complaint. From the second, only the poetic tribute we have recorded.

“This is slow work,” said Violoncello; “try the next house.”
Another polka. Window opened; and a head with a night-cap and a body with a dressing-gown appeared. The hands of the body bore a small yellow flute, with which the owner kept bad time.

Meanwhile, the following conversation occurred within:—
“Mr. Tootletoo, do you want to be my death?”

“No, Fanny; its only for a moment. These men play as well as Costa's band.”

“Do you want to see me in my coffin, Mr. Tootletoo?”
“Cover yourself up with the clothes,” replied the husband.

Here there was a protracted fit of coughing.

“Do you hear that, Mr. Tootletoo?”
“No, my dear,” said the flute “amateur;” “I'm a listening to the band.”

On this Mr. Tootletoo was jerked back so violently and unexpectedly, that he dropped his flute, and the window shut with a smack. “Nothing here,” said Ophecleide.

“Yes,” said Violoncello. “It will sell for sixpence.” And he put the flute in his pocket.

“Never say die,” quoth the energetic Drum. “Try the next.”

The result was the contents of two pitchers of water from the second floor which were thrown so adroitly that they did great execution; the drenching being followed by a consolatory assurance that there were two more pitchers at hand. The rapid closing of the window prevented all rejoinder.

“Here's treatment for hart,” said Violoncello.
“And for hartists,” said the Triangle.

“Try the next,” said the persevering Bang.

“I'm wet to the skin,” said the Trombone. “I think I'll go home, and take a guel, and put my feet in hot water.”

But the rest protesting, another experiment was made; on which a gentleman, in a Turkish cap and a flowered dressing-gown, with whiskers, beard, and moustaches, showed himself, and gently waved his right hand, from which hung tassels embroidered with gold. Presently, a sylph-like young lady appeared beside him, and encircled his motionless shoulders with her symmetrical arm, and looked up in his hairy face. The greater part of this information was given by the policeman who flashed his bull's-eye across the couple. It was only for an instant; but a policeman's eyes are sharp, and he can see a very great deal in a very short time.

But to go on with the tale. The young lady disappeared into the room; but immediately returned with something like a silk purse in her hand. This she gave to her companion, who threw the purse into the street, exclaiming, “A pittance from a lover of art.” And immediately the window closed, and the curtains resumed their sway.

“Now, then,” said Violoncello, feeling the purse, “a half sov.; it can't be nothing less from such a swell.”

“I don't know that,” said the Ophecleide; “perhaps it's only a sixpence.”

“Pooh, pooh, pooh!” burst from them all. “Here, go under the lamp.”

The coin was wrapped up in brown paper; then common writing-paper; then glazed writing-paper; then silk paper; and then appeared—a farthing!

The shock was dreadful—worse than the shower-bath; and then followed another shower-bath of malediction, which is a polite word for a naughty thing. When they had cooled a little—we mean morally—Violoncello, who had been examining the envelopes of the smallest of the coin, said, “There's something written;” and, holding the glazed paper up to the lamp, he read, “A payment adequate to the music.” The maledictory shower-bath began to operate again: “Here's a go!” “Here's a sell!” “Here's a do!” “Here's a limposition!” “Here's a hexortion!” “Here's a swindle!” burst rapidly forth; and then again resumed, “He's a robber of poor men!” “He's a ruffian, as don't know nothing about what music is!” “He's an extortioner!” But Violoncello stopped, and propounded the last and best theory:

“He's a swindler, or a forger, or a genteel burglar, or som'at of that kind; and he's disguised, and is a hiding in the Dials. What would a man dressed like him be staying in the Dials for with that there young lady if he hadn't a bad reason for it?”

“Ah, that's it; that's the explanation. Nothing but it.” And Violoncello rose still higher in credit.

“One more house, and it will be the last,” said the Violoncello; “but let it be respectable.”

“Then we must leave the Dials.” And so they did, selecting Gower-street as the flower of respectability; and began to play what they considered their *chef d'œuvre*—first, very piano; and, when they got impatient, very fortissimo. But respectability never opened either door or window. Its blank monotonous face ran down through a mile of lamps, and geniality seemed impossible. Only thrice the doors opened, and twice a flunkey came merely to the steps.

The first said:—“You must go away. Your noise is spoiling the music in the drawing-room.”

The second said:—“My master hates music that isn't music; and told me to tell you that if you played near his house, he would send for the police.”

But the third was different. There was geniality here and there in starched, snobbish respectability.

A tidy servant-girl came tripping, with her dress held up, and said in a voice that was better music than any which had been made that night, “My missis is ill, and confined to bed, and she can't bear loud music, but she sends you five shillings, and wishes the night was better for your sakes.”

As a parting salute to the neighbourhood in which they had been so ill-treated, Violoncello proposed that they should play, each down the different streets, “Rule Britannia” and “God save the Queen;” and the experiment turned out famously. An old gentleman came out in his slippers, and said he liked an old custom, and contributed liberally. Another old gentleman said from a window that he loved loyalty. A poor third noddle in an orchestra threw out sixpence in a bit of paper. An old fat lady subscribed to the concert liberally; and two little nimble milliners, who came with one shawl over both their heads, held out each her three-penny bit. In fact, the neighbourhood was mellowing: supper, grog, and pipes, were softening their hearts; and the effect was quite a shower-bath of silver and copper—the most pleasant one the Waits had experienced; and so they played on briskly until it struck two (you may see by the dial of the clock that it is ten minutes to that hour), and then adjourned to a tavern, where the proceeds were faithfully divided in equal shares—even Bang and Tinkle not suffering from the character of their instruments.

And so ends our “Night with the Waits.”

ANGUS B. REACH.

THE MISTLETOE-SELLER.

BY EDMUND H. YATES.

GAZING from the window casement on the trees all stripped and bare,
Heard I young and merry voices ringing through the frosty air;
Saw two maidens with their sister (she a widow's emblems wore),
Standing by an old man, selling Christmas at a garden door.

Brightly shone the maidens' faces; e'en the lonely widow's eye,
Kindled, as her thoughts were carried back into the years gone by—
As she gazed upon the berries symboling the merry time—
Gazed upon the old man's face, and listened to his cheering rhyme.

“Buy my berries! buy my berries! here is holly red as cherries,
Rough and thorny as the season, holier than all trees that grow;
For according to the story, prickly leaves like these before ye,
Round the Saviour's brows were circled, eighteen hundred years ago.

“Maidens hasten—ne'er a trace on your bright foreheads care has left;
Hasten too, thou lonely widow, of thy lord so soon bereft;
Christmas adds to your enjoyments—Christmas lightens thy despair
Vanquished are our fears and sorrows in the genial Christmas air.

“Mistletoe! I, too, can sell you. Of its virtues need I tell you?
How of old the saintly Druids revered this humble tree?
What, when in this Christmas weather, loving hearts are met together
Are its properties peculiar, sure you need not learn of me.”

Thus he sung; but as I listened sank my heart within my breast,
As I watched that elder sister, in the widow's mourning dressed;
What sad thoughts her heart must cherish of the loved one gone before
Who 'neath such a branch had pressed her in the vanished days of yore.

Blithely trolling out his carol went the old man on his way:
All his stock of mistletoe was purchased by the maidens gay;
And, as each one with her partner, 'neath the bough suspended, trips
Who shall say the pretty widow's are the only unkiassed lips?

CHRISTMAS AT THE DIGGINGS.

(COMMUNICATED BY THE AUTHOR OF “THE THREE COLONIES OF AUSTRALIA.”)

MOLLY DIBBS TO MISS JANE SCRUBBER.

MY DEAR JANE,—

How you will stare when you get this letter, and what's inside it. You must take care of the thin bits of paper, and take it down to Hustin Frires, to the Bank, where they'll make it all right; and mind and don't lose 'em; and take a cab all to yourself as you go back, for fear of pickpockets. Oh, Jenny, little did I think this time three years, when you lent me four-pence to make up the money, after I pawned me shawl, and we started off to see the company go to Lady Blatherum's ball, that in less than three years I shall come to be one of the quality myself. I always thought Jack was made for a gentleman, though he laughed at the notion, and that was the reason that I would him with nothing but what he could carry at the end of his axe in a bundle; and wouldn't have old Toppington, with his flash gin palace and five children; though, to be sure, aunt did go on awful, and never forgave me till day when we all quarrelled, and cried, and hugged one and another, and made it up at Gravesend, just before we sailed away for Australia.

Yes, my dear Jenny, Jack has gone and done the trick beautiful—he made enough money at his trade at Melbourne to buy a lot of land, where I am agoing to have a regular house, with a parlour and a drawing-room all quite genteel; and then him and me cut away to the diggings with Bill Slokkum and his wife—her as was Betty Grafty; and Bob, the coalheaver; and a man and his wife by the name of Bagnall, that are natives—that is, not blacks, but born and reared here—leastaways he was, she was from Marybone. And we had a horse and cart, and was a fortnight on the road, and lived out of doors same as when we once went gipsying to Epping Forest, and slept under the cart at night. And we had lots of luck, our holes turned out first-rate. Jack's share comes to nigh upon twelve hundred pounds. So when I go back to Melbourne I mean to set the fashions, which, of course, I can do, having been six months under-kitchen-maid in Belgrave-square. As for our quality—at least, those that used to be before these diggings turned up—they know nothing about it. I only wish friends would send Lord Balmerston out for Governor. My Lady does know what she should have all my support.

Oh, Jenny, you've no notion how delightful things is here—everything topsy-turvy. We are the masters and missuses, and the swells have to wait upon us. If any of them, although it should be the Gold Commissioner himself, want my Jack to do a job of carpentering, they must ask me; and if I don't like their cut, or I want Jack to take me a walk, why then he says “No, thank you, my good man,” quite polite-like, “I can't find time to accommodate you.”

Everything is contrarywise here to what it is with you in White-chapel. When we are going to bed you are rousing up; when we are perspiring most dreadful, you are slapping your arms to drive away the blue frost.

We are now looking out for Christmas—we can tell it's coming on, Bagnall says, by its being so blessed hot. Oh, I shall think of you and me in Old England, flattening our noses against the cook-shops, longing for a slice of smoking plum-duff; when our Christmas pudding comes on the table, big enough to feed all your court, and not a few dabs of plums spread about almost out of hollaing distance, but as thick as you can stick. Why, Jenny, we have none of your half-ounces of tea and half-quartens of bread: our party takes a chest at a time, with a couple or three bags of sugar, five hundredweight, and half a ton of flour. When we make tea we stir it up by the handful. Then, when we do make a feast, what do you think we have. You'll never guess. Why, real champagne fizzing stuff, like ginger pop; only it gets into your head, and costs £2 a bottle. Not that we do much in that way, for Jack was always rather temperance; but there are plenty here of single fellows, with lots of luck, always ready to stand treat if I will just look to their shirts and buttons a bit, and likewise speak a word favourable to some of the single lasses.

But my dear Jane, when you read this, you will say, is there no unpleasantness in this Australia? Does everybody pick up golden nuggets and wash out lots of scales and dust? Not by no means, my dear. First, the fleas is dreadful; likewise the dust and little black flies what get into your eyes and nose, so that green veils are as common as on a Epsom day in Kennington. Then when it rains, it rains as if the water-tap had burst right over your head, and blows so that my Jack says you must hold the hair on your head. Then as for the gold, bless your soul, it's not to be scratted up with your fingers. No; you must make pits as deep as wells, and go at it as if you was laying gas-pipes; and you may have no luck, and get nothing, or next to it. But then, there it is that we beat the swells. Five shillings a dozen for washing shirts, £1 to 30s. a day for carpentering at houses, and such like: why what is it to me, as was used to stand at the wash-tub all day for 1s. 6d. and my vicuals, and perhaps a drop of beer; or for Jack, as used to walk a good three miles to work, from six to six.

But Lord, Jenny, it makes me laugh—though, to be sure, I'm sorry for the poor devils—to see the figure the quality cut that come here, with their thin shiny boots and eye-glasses, thinking to pick up nuggets, as if they were pretty shells at Margate. They've got no money—they've got no trade. They despise such as us on the passage; and then, when they find digging no go, they've nothing left but to turn odd men, and wait upon us that are the real quality. Some won't have 'em at all, they are so awkward and stupid; although the Bishop preached a sermon about lucky diggers being not too proud to poor guests. But I persuaded Jack to speak to our party for a couple that was uncommon baddy off, and particular humble, for I thought I might pick up a notion or two about fashions for the time when I open Whitechapel House for a swarty, in Melbourne. I remember one of 'em well when I was in the Square—he give me a bad half-crown to give a letter to our young lady, and wanted to kiss me, the blackguard—by the name of the Hon. Captain Blatherum,

of the 19th Hussars, and did look beautiful in his uniform, to be sure, for he had not lost his front teeth then. But he keeps all that dark now, and calls himself Mr. Frederick Blunder. I did hear from Mr. Tubs, the butler, that the Captain had gone all wrong, and been signing somebody's name or something, and been obliged to go to Bullon in foreign parts. But I said nothing, except to Jack, for it is such fun to have a real captain and a lord's grandson to blow up when I feel cross. But he is handy at nick-knocking off bottle rings and corks without breaking the bottles, and aint a bad cook, but such a lazy beggar and such a one to lish, you wouldnt believe. Our party likes him because he can sing, and no mistake. Our other slavey has been one of the slop gents, in white cravats, that roll out ribands so saucy. Sokum's wife remembers him; though he pretends his governor is a real gentleman, we know better. He's not much use, but he can sing too, and play on the fiddle, and the Captin likes him because he gets the wood and the water and does the dirty work. Oh, Jenny, I often wish you could see me on a holiday, in my gold-coloured satin gown and blue parasol, hanging on Jack's arm, with our little Maggie dressed exactly like little Lady Julia Huffly, and Jack looking so noble in his mustachios and red shirt, and these poor devils of swells running about quite respectful—ah! you would enjoy it, as I do. I often think of the pious lady at Clapham, who was so genteel she would not have me, because I came from Whitechapel. I seen her son the other day driving a cart for his living, dirty, and rayther drunk.

But, never mind, my girl, you shall come and have a share of our luck, though you can't spend Christmas with us. Mind, before the ship sails, and go and see Hampton Court and Winsor Castle, and bring pictures of both, and one of the Queen, and remember all about them, likewise a book. And I send a list of the clothes you are to bring for me out of the hundred pounds; and give five pounds to the deformed girl in Rosemary-row, that taught me to write; if it had not been for her, I could never have been one of the quality when we came to our fortune. Also, buy me, for my drawing room table, four books—one white, one green, one red, one blue; and a little round thing they sell at spy-glass shops, called a globe, painted different countries; but mind the Belgrave-square is wrote on one side, and Victoria on the other.

Likewise, I shall want some clothes for Jack, who only wants the right things to be quite the



THE MISTLETOE-SELLER.—DRAWN BY PHIZ.—(SEE PRECEDING PAGE.)

gentleman. Go to Fussy, the tailor that used to make for Lord Huffly, and get two suits in the height of the fashion, Jack's exactly the same size as Lord Huffly, only a better figure about the chest. If Fussy makes any humming and hawing, show him the bank-notes—he'll do anything for money. And now there's one thing more to make Jack complete—that's a hat. I want the best; none of your ticket slops for me—your French silks and Paris velvets flaring in Whitechapel. There are some tidy shops in the Strand; but those don't come to my notion. You go to Pall-mall: there's a shop with one hat in the window—buy me that hat! If it will fit a gentleman, I am sure it will fit my Jack.

And now, dear Jenny, my paper is full, and I must end. Make yourself comfortable, and set out as soon as Captain Higgins tells you the *Barbary Bell* is ready; and drink our healths on Christmas-day, when we drink yours. Jack sends love, and says he has got a husband for you; so no more from your loving cousin,

MOLLY DINNS.

P.S.—I open this letter to tell you how we manage Christmas at the Diggings. No fires, except to boil the pots; and no snowballing. But no work, and no shivering and shaking; everybody has plenty; for those that have not been lucky are welcome to take a tucker of what they please. For our party, we had a quarter of a bullock, and two wild turkeys; a lot of Van Diemen potatoes, at 2s. a pound. We don't dine in-doors, but just sit down on the grass—and there's very little of that near the Diggings—handy to a creek for water. The bachelors stand a dozen of champagne and a dozen of colonial, so we lay about and eat and drink, and give what's left to the dogs and the blacks.

The "swells" are rather down in the mouth; for I take their Christmas is as much the worse, as ours is the better, than it used to be. It's precious hot; but that doesn't prevent the fiddles from going like mad all round, and no end of dancing. Instead of the cradles swish-swashing down the valley, we hear the German brass band. They know all our tunes; and when they flare out with "A Good Time Coming," I feel rather choked in the throat like, to think that it come in earnest to us poor folks. I'm a'most sure I saw a tear in the eye of the Captain when he caught the tune at the same moment Bill Stokum was roaring out "more Champagny, and look alive, my boy." So good-bye, once more! God bless you, my girl, and send you here soon to join our next Christmas pic-nic as well my swarry.



THE CHRISTMAS PIC-NIC AT THE DIGGINGS.—DRAWN BY H. G. HINE.



COLD CHRISTMAS? - NO!

THE POETRY BY CHARLES MACKAY.

THE MUSIC COMPOSED BY SIR HENRY R. BISHOP.

Andantino, ed animato.—M.M. ♩ = 66.

Solo. 1. Cold Christmas? No! Our
2. Old Christmas? No! Though

fp *cres.* *f* *ten.* *rf* *ff* *p* *mf* *p*

Christ - mas is not cold; Al - though the north winds blow, And pile the drift - ing snow, And the
states and king - doms wear, And change and ru - in grow From a - ges as they flow; He's as

beech - trees on the freez - ing wold Rock sad - ly to and fro, And the beech - trees on the freez - ing wold Rock
light of tread, as young and fair, As a thou - sand years a - go, He's as light of tread, as young and fair As a

rf

sad - ly to and fro; Our Christ - mas bears a warm true heart; His face is red with glee; And he
thou - sand years a - go. The morn - ing beams are al - ways new, And scat - ter bless - ings free; And the

cres. *fp*

più lento, ed espres.

jest and laughs, And he sings and quaffs; He was ne-ver un-kind to me, my love: May he ne-ver be cold to thee!
 Christ-mas day Is as new as they; He was ne-ver old to me, my love: May he ne-ver grow old to thee!

cres. *p e sosten.*

tempo primo

Cold Christ-mas? No, no, no! Cold Christ-mas! Say not so: He is warm and bright, And he brings de-light To the
 Old Christ-mas? No, no, no! Old Christ-mas! Say not so: He shall ne-ver part With his youth of heart While there's

mf *p* *cres.* *rf* *p*

hearts both of high and low, of high and low, To the hearts both of high and low, both high and low.
 love in this world be-low, this world be-low, While there's love in this world be-low, this world be-low.

cres. *mf* *f*

TRIO, OR CHORUS.

SOPRANO I.

Cold Christmas? No, no, no! Cold Christmas! Say not so: He is warm and bright, And he brings de-light To the hearts both of high and low, of high and
 Old Christmas? No, no, no! Old Christmas! Say not so; He shall ne-ver part With his youth of heart While there's love in this world below, this world be-

SOPRANO II.

Cold Christmas? No, no, no! Cold Christmas! Say not so: And he brings de-light To the hearts both of high and low, of high and
 Old Christmas? No, no, no! Old Christmas! Say not so: With his youth of heart While there's love in this world be-low, this world be-

BASSO

Cold Christmas? No, no, no! Cold Christmas! Say not so: He is warm and bright, And he brings de-light To the hearts both of high and low, of high and
 Old Christmas? No, no, no! Old Christmas! Say not so; He shall ne-ver part With his youth of heart While there's love in this world below, this world be-

ten. *p* *cres.* *f*

rf

low, To the hearts both of high and low, both high and low.
 low, While there's love in this world be-low, in this world be-low.

rf

low, To the hearts both of high and low, both high and low.
 low, While there's love in this world be-low, in this world be-low.

rf

low, To the hearts both of high and low, both high and low.
 low, While there's love in this world be-low, in this world be-low.

rf *f*

COLD CHRISTMAS?—NO!

BY CHARLES MACKAY.—THE MUSIC BY SIR. H. R. BISHOP, KT.

I.

COLD Christmas? No!

Our Christmas is not cold;
Although the north winds blow,
And pile the drifting snow,
And the beech trees on the freezing wold
Rock sadly to and fro,
Our Christmas bears a warm true heart;
His face is red with glee;
And he jests and laughs,
And he sings and quaffs.
He was never unkind to me, my love:
May he never be cold to thee!
Cold Christmas? No! no! no!
Cold Christmas! Say not so:
He is warm and bright,
And he brings delight
To the hearts both of high and low.

II.

Old Christmas? No!
Though states and kingdoms wear,
And change and ruin grow
From ages as they flow;
He's as light of tread, as young and fair
As a thousand years ago.
The morning beams are always new,
And scatter blessings free;
And the Christmas-day
Is as new as they.
He was never old to me, my love;
May he never grow old to thee!
Old Christmas? No! no! no!
Old Christmas! say not so;
He shall never part
With his youth of heart
While there's love in this world below.

CHRISTMAS-EVE AT AN OLD FARM-HOUSE.

BY EDMUND OLLIER.

CHRISTMAS is a season of boisterous merriment, of hearty physical enjoyment, of feasting and hilarity; but it is also a time of obscure old-world faith and traditional romance—of poetical beliefs and customs, derived from the superstitions of an earlier day, and lingering, ghost-like, about our winter hearths, even in these utilitarian times. It is true that they no longer form part of our religious creed, and it is well that they do not—for, as matters of serious belief, they are pernicious; yet still they find, and must always keep, a home in every loving and reverent heart, for the sake of their simple, child-like beauty, and for that redeeming sense of spirituality out of which they arose, and which still renders them of interest to all who have any perception of those vast, vague regions which stretch beyond the limits of bare reality.

The only way, however, to see Christmas—and, especially, its advent—surrounded by all its poetical associations, is to spend it in the country. In town it is tricked out in the last new fashions—very pretty to look at, yet in nowise romantic. But there are old, out-of-the-way nooks in England, lying from off the great high roads, seem to have been forgotten by the grand reformer, Time, and to be the same now as they were centuries ago; places where the dead men, whose very graves have long since vanished from the little, grassy churchyard, might come to life again, and return to their own identical houses, and go back to their work under familiar elms, and find their former haunts and manners still the same. These are the spots where you feel the Poetry of Christmas to its full; where you feast, as it were, in the presence of your ancestors, and see in imagination the shades of your English forefathers descend, like a gentle twilight, over all.

I once spent a Christmas after this manner at the house of a friend in Hertfordshire. My friend was a sort of gentleman farmer—a man of education, and passionately fond of ancient customs; and the house in which he lived was one of those delightful old edifices which give you the sense of home more completely than any modern building can. Its solid oaken timbers and massive brick walls did not, perhaps, really exclude the weather more perfectly than the light, economically-built tenements of the present day; but they gave you the sentiment of exclusion in a higher degree—and that is much. You seemed fortified—not simply housed—against the assaults of wind and rain and snow. You heard “the excluded tempest” raving at a distance, and knew that there was more than a brick and a half between yourself and it. Then there was something in the aspect of that old house, as in the aspect of all old houses, which in itself engendered a poetical frame of mind. Who could live for many days among its lustrous-paneled rooms, its deep-recessed bow-windows (one of them of stained glass), its fantastic passages leading to strange and shadowy nooks, its legendary chambers, its capacious fire-places, its carved chimney-boards, and its vast echoing flights of stairs, without lapsing into a pleasant dream of antiquity and romance? Who could behold, from outside, its crowding gables and grotesque chimney-pots, its glowing red-brick walls, mantled with ivy, and touched with wandering lines of moss, like gleams of sunlight fixed, without observing to himself, “This is the kind of nest for a poet to live in”? Who could listen at night to the old primeval language of the wind among the trees with which it was encircled, and not feel a more gentle and awfully loving sense of the Universe come over him? Another thing which made me like this house better than any other which I had ever seen, was the fact that, although situated in a most woody and rustic part of the country, it was at no very great distance from London; so that its occupants could pass from solitude to the thick of town life, and from that back again to solitude, with little expenditure either of time or trouble. Sitting in a dreamy mood by the fire-side at night, one might almost imagine one heard the throbings of the great heart of the metropolis coming towards one upon the wind, when it set strongly from the south. But this, of course, was merely fanciful, as the place of which I speak is about five-and-twenty miles from London.

One of the plainest signs, at the house of my friend F., of the near approach of the great festival, was the sallying of the whole family into the adjacent woods, accompanied by the men-servants, on the morning of Christmas-eve, for the purpose of cutting branches of evergreen, and of selecting a great log of wood to burn, after the old manner, on the dining-room hearth; for, although F. burnt coals at all other times of the year, he would on no account omit the Christmas yule-block. On the occasion to which I am more particularly referring, he entertained us, while we were backing about the copses, by relating the origin and antiquity of these sylvan tributes to the season. It is true, he observed, that they are of pagan origin; yet they seem to harmonise with the old pastoral character of primitive Christianity, and to be typical of its enduring greenness and its woodland innocence. He reminded us

that mistletoe was the sacred plant of the British Druids; and that the old dark forests which, centuries ago, covered the greater part of this island, had often witnessed the solemn processions of white-robed priests through the glooms and the close intertangles, and had seen the mystical branches of this strange parasitical production lopped by golden sickles, and distributed among the people, who would burst forth into the outer daylight, shouting “The Mistletoe for the New Year!” He told us that the Celtic and Gothic nations, before their conversion to Christianity, paid equal reverence to this plant; and that even the ancient Greeks regarded it with a religious feeling. He also remarked, on the authority of Stukeley, that the custom of placing mistletoe on the altars of churches, was preserved in the North of England even so late as the early part of last century; and that at York, about the same period, mistletoe was carried on Christmas-eve to the high altar of the cathedral, and a public and universal pardon of all wicked people was proclaimed “at the gates of the city towards the four quarters of heaven.”

On our return, the yule-log was kindled, and the rooms were decked with the shining branches of evergreens; when my friend straightway grew eloquent on that beautiful superstition about the sylvan spirits sheltering themselves in these artificial bowers during the time that their own woodland haunts are cold and dark and bare. After supper (at which there were mince-pies enough to give us all indigestions for a year), we had a huge bowl of wassail—genuine old English wassail; not made, according to the fashion of some degenerate sons of their fathers, of foreign wine, but of native ale, just heightened in its flavour by Eastern spices, and hissing with a wealth of roasted apples. The greater part of this having been speedily disposed of, our host proposed that the remainder should be devoted to a performance which he said his servants always expected—an old silly custom, as he described it, though I believe he was very well pleased to be a party to its execution—namely, the drinking a health to the apple-trees out in the open orchard. As we all thought there must be something very picturesque and striking in this ceremony, we were well pleased to be present at it; so, the farm-servants being summoned, away we went to the appointed spot, the oldest of the servants bearing the bowl at the head of the procession.

It was a dark, clear, still night; not cold, and with no falling weather, but filled with that deep solemnity and repose which you can only know to the full in winter and in the country. A sabbath quietness lay over the whole earth, and seemed to stretch upward to the heavens, which, in their vast and starless gloom, appeared hushed into a profound and mighty sleep. The trees and hedges, dimly seen, like intenser darknesses in the more general darkness, gave out no voice, and made no movement; for not the slightest wind was abroad. One of the servants carried a horn lantern, which, suddenly revealing in its progress small sections of the landscape, and as quickly merging them into chaos, and every now and then striking up gaunt shadows which lengthened out into the wide vagueness of the night, created around us a sort of phantasmagorical world of advancing and receding shapes. We met no ghosts, however; and, having arrived at the orchard, we formed ourselves into a circle around one of the best-bearing apple-trees (the rogues took good care, in their selection, that no discredit might be attached to the charm, by an untoward result the following autumn), and the wassail-bearer sang, to an ancient tune, that seemed as though it might have been chanted centuries ago by Saxon tillers of the soil, this stanza:—

Here's to thee, old apple tree!
Whence thou may'st bud, and whence thou may'st blow,
And whence thou may'st bear apples enow!
Hats full! caps full!
Bushel—bushel—sacks full,
And my pockets full too! Huzza!

Here we all set up a great shout, strangely mocked by the echoes; and the old fellow who performed the part of high-priest in this religious observance took a good draught from the wassail-bowl, and threw the rest of the ale, together with the fragments of apple, or “lamb's-wool,” at the tree. We then returned to the house; F. justifying the ceremony by the injunction of Herrick, one of his most favourite poets:—

Wassalle the trees, that they may bear
You many a plum and many a pear;
For more or less fruits they will bring
As you do give them wassailing.

On getting back again to the warm, bright room, another bowl of the same Christmas beverage was brewed; and, in the words of the poet just quoted,

We still sat up,
Sphering about the wassail-cup.

The yule-log burnt hotly and odorously; the evergreens flashed and flickered in the blaze; the strong liquor steeped our hearts as in the radiance of fifty summers; and we talked over all kinds of delightful Christmas traditions. We spoke of that marvellous old Glastonbury Thorn, which sprang from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea, and from which sprigs have been cut and propagated all over England, and, as the story goes, bud on Christmas-eve, and are in full bloom all the next day until night. We would by no means agree with the modern disbelief in this miracle, which we thought as respectable as many other alleged miracles. We refused to acknowledge that there are similar trees all over the East, from the seeds of which others may be raised in this country; and we execrated the fanaticism of the Puritans, who cut down the original stock during the Civil Wars. From this we passed to graver subjects; and fell to telling the stock-ghost-stories of the country round. Thence wider and wider did we launch forth upon the grey sea of Superstition; touching upon remote islands of ghastliness and dread; wandering in grim forests and haunted places between rocks; entering lonely houses upon deserted roads in the evening twilight; lurking about old churches and churchyards “in the dead waste and middle of the night;” digging for hidden treasure among ancient moss-grown ruins; attending Witch-Sabbaths in solitary barns; straying, in short, over the whole of that wild, dark region of belief which has been finely called “the night side of Nature.” Not that I, for one, place any serious faith in these dusky mysteries, which, viewed as a creed, can produce none but evil effects; still, while man remains such a riddle to himself—while there are such vast, dim, shut-up chambers in our being—any attempt to people the darkness with tangible forms, however distorted by ignorance or fear, cannot fail to be of interest to all speculative minds, in the absence of certain intelligence. So I have always felt with respect to these matters; and so I believe my friend F. felt.

Among other superstitions of which we spoke, there was one which bears so exclusively upon the Christmas season, that I must here briefly advert to it. It was an old Swedish tradition, to the effect that “at the festival of Christmas,” according to Olaus Magnus, “there is a strange mutation of men into wolves, in the cold northern parts; and that these human wolves attack houses, labour to break down the doors, that they may destroy the inmates, and descend into the cellars, where they drink out whole tuns of beer or mead, leaving the empty barrels heaped one upon another. And one skilled in the manner of this great change of a natural man into a brute, says that it is effected by a man mumbling certain words, and drinking a cup of ale to a man wolf; and, if he accept the same, the man natural may change himself into the form of a wolf, by going into a secret cellar or private wood.”

At length our legends and our wassail came to a close; and, like the party of story-tellers in “L'Allegro,” we retired to bed. Here I had not been long, before I heard the waits singing their carols beneath my window. The music which they chanted was wild, strange, and plaintive, yet soothing; and seemed at once to suggest the idea of “wind among still woods” at night. I lay in bed listening to them, and thinking at first, of the dark, hushed, far-outlying country all about, and of which the voices appeared to be born; then, gradually, a sense of earth faded from beneath me, and I lay as if cradled in empty space, borne upward by those long, sighing melodies, which seemed as though they had been sounding out of my own heart from all antiquity, and as if they could not cease. They did cease at last, however; and then I fell asleep.

Such were some of the features of the advent of Christmas, as I experienced them at that old Hertfordshire farm-house. Never shall I forget thee, thou pleasant home of comfort and romantic memories! and often, in day-dreams and night-visions, may I behold thy hospitable chimneys rising from out their nestling homestead trees, and walk with thy kind-hearted master (now departed in the body) about thy shadowy corridors and sun-bright rooms, and listen to the voice of thy attendant woods speaking their eternal secrets to the sky!

OWED TO THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

BY ALFRED CROWQUILL.



THE BIRDS THAT NESTLE IN THE CHRISTMAS-TREE.

That Christmas Tree, that Christmas Tree!
It is not what it used to be
When I was in my infancy—
That Christmas Tree!

That Christmas Tree, that Christmas Tree!
It held its arms out straight to me
With toys in all their brilliancy—
That Christmas Tree!

That Christmas Tree, that Christmas Tree!
Aspiring hopes it brought to me;
For King, indeed, I wished to be—
That Christmas Tree!

That Christmas Tree, that Christmas Tree!
My heart leap'd only just to see
The toys that might belong to me
From Christmas Tree!

And, happy time, when Christmas Tree
Such stolen kisses promised me,
When I was nearly twenty-three—
That Christmas Tree.

But now, alas! that Christmas Tree
Is sadly changed; indeed to me
'Tis not the same at all to see—
That Christmas Tree.

I'm under wed-lock! lost the key!
I'm fast as any man can be;
'Tis called a matter of money—
As you will see.

Now of the Tree I'm parent stem,
My branches, when I look on them,
All youthful follies I condemn,
As wrong, you see.

My honeymoon had many fees,
In all its lawyer-like degrees,
For then they charge you what they please,
Those — never mind.

But when our buds began to grow,
And stood out in an awful row,
And some came out in real full blow,
I'd lots to find.

First Tom's commission in the Guards,
And dresses for the girls by yards,
And Joe's false cannons at billiards,
Were dreadful blows.
Then suppers that I gave young men,
Who never would be off at ten—
Who were so long about the when
They would propose.

The tradesmen flocked at Christmas, too:
Of course, “they'd got a bill just due.”
For which they must depend on you
To meet at all.

And then the suppers and wax-lights
With fiddlers and the harp in flights,
And then the men to put to rights,
After each ball.

Then that green brougham, just to show
We were above—all those below;
And let the neighbours see and know
We were genteel.
Next, singing, dancing, classics, too,
For all my little thriving crew;
Taught me what fathers only knew,
In Fortune's wheel.

Then servants with their minds all bent,
On swelling out what must be spent,
With taxes, followers, and rent,
Were awful pests.
Then poor relations in a row,
In their attendance never slow,
Will always patronise you so,
And be your guests.

The girls all stick by their mamma,
And sadly sacrifice papa
For boxes at the opera,
Without remorse.
The draper, modiste, wreaths, and gloves,
To decorate my charming doves,
My situation much improves—
'Tis all of course.

Then courting in my house is rife,
And young men will not take a wife
Without a good round sum for life
From out your cash.
Then wedding-breakfasts and trousseaus,
Composed of—what I do not know,
Are rather dear parts of the show,
And dreadful trash.

Now these are fatal truths, you see;
And yearly come round all to me,
And hang upon my Christmas Tree.
Then why should I
Sing praises of a by-gone joke,
Intended for the younger folk?
My merry Christmas is a joke,
To fun defy.

And really 'tis a horrid sneer,
To wish for me a happy year,
When all the wretched bills appear
To tax my purse.
So resolute I still will be,
And say I do not like the tree,
That brings such bitter fruit to me—
For nothing's worse.

My tree is grand! as grand can be;
It brings a prize to all but me;
For in each sweet a bill I see,
To check my smile.
One will stalk in amidst the fun,
By whom I am that instant done—
With rapid bills that always run—
A SHARP OLD “FILE.”



THE OLD FILE THAT WILL COME AT CHRISTMAS.



THE CHRISTMAS TREE, AS SEEN BY THE FATHER OF A FAMILY.—DRAWN BY H. G. HINE.